CHICAGO LEDGER

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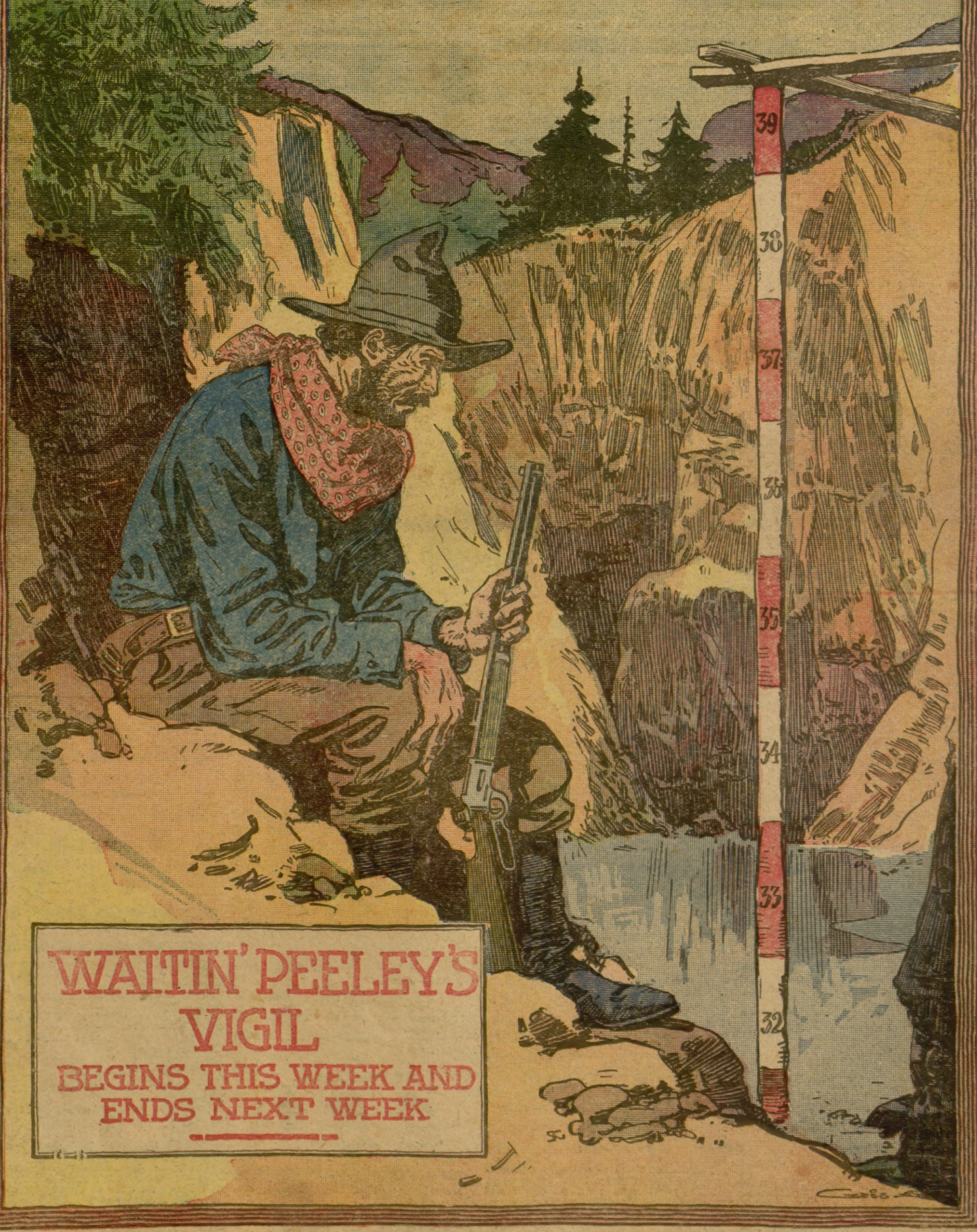

WAITIN' PEELEY'S VIGIL

BEGINS THIS WEEK AND ENDS NEXT WEEK

CHICAGO LEDGER

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All rights in stories purchased by the Ledger revert to the author following their publication by us. All persons are warned against reprinting them without first obtaining the consent of the author.

A Peep Into the Editor's Mail Bag

THE Editor of the Ledger reads a good many manuscripts in the course of the week. He also reads a good many letters which accompany manuscripts; or which are about manuscripts. Strangely enough, as he once said in a previous article, writers who actually sell their work invariably submit their story only and let it go at that. And, equally strangely, the writers who know nothing about writing, always accompany their manuscript with a letter.

What do they write about, these people who wish to write? Will we be violating any confidence if we reproduce last week's mail, which refers to manuscripts, without publishing the name at the bottom of the letter? We think that is quite fair to all of us. So let us sit down and see exactly what comes to the Editor each week in the manuscript bag, unchanged by a single letter from the form in which it comes.

From a Soldier on the Line.

Editor the Ledger, Esq., Chicago, Ill.

Dear sir:

I send you (see attached) without request a Rhyme finish, to one of my Beaver Fables, in prose. You can see at a glance, I am no College bred, Highbrow writer.

I dont owe the Colleges, or Highbrows, any thing. I am my self, nobody else. Live in a Cabin in the Grand Canyon of the Green. Write cause I cant keep from it.

Therefor have quite a lot of dope on hand. never sold anything, in the literary line. dont know as I ever will. My productions, are for the rank and file. Easily understood by them.

I know, for I am a soldier of the line, both Civil and Military line. Not in the late war, but all wars (with few exceptions of wars to escape graft and tyrany) are about the same, some on larger scale larger opertunity for graft, the principle products of the average war, the heavy graft of substance goes to the high guys, the light airy stuff, for spirtual nourishment, (Angle Food) goes to the Rank and File. thats the Reason they are so Damn Much Better, when it comes down to real facts.

I have served on the Frontier, Spanish, Phil. Wars. I have had chance for observation, and not forgot, what I have observed.

So if you would like my ideas in rhyme, let me know at any time.

Respectfully Yours
H. Y. T.

Submits Friend's Stories, Not Own!

Dear sir:—

Herein I send you three stories written by a close friend of mine, which he wishes me to have published for him.

While they are crudely written, yet I hope you will examine them closely, and find in them the very good points and phrases which carry an interest with them which the reader cannot rid himself of until he has read them to the end.

I hope you can use them in your magazine, and if so, whatever price you pay, will be acceptable. Otherwise, please use the enclosed stamp in returning the stories safely to me.

Remaining, respectfully yours,
B. R. H.

Doesn't Ask Payment for Material.

Dear Editor:—

If this manuscript is found available for your magazine, I will be greatly pleased to see it used. If it is worth anything, of course I would like to get the money for it, if not you have it for nothing. I am just beginning my career and money is not yet necessary as experience. Hoping this is published, I await your wishes.

C. R.

Writing Fever Returns at Close of Great War.

Editor Chicago Ledger:—

While living in our former home town, an older brother was agent for the Blade and Ledger and we kids simply devoured the Ledger I was born with the writeing bug it being an heredity. And always I intended to write things just like those I read. I graduated just in time to enlist in the world war and for a time did not think much of writing, but just as soon as I got settled the bug began again. I hope the enclosed finds a home with you It is impossible to get the out going, size envelopes here hope the Ms. does not stick.

Wishing the Ledger every success

L. N. A.

Yes, but We Aren't Kind by Any Means!

Kind Sir,—

Do you buy stories if so I have written one.

So if it suits you and you buy them and this is all right send me what you think it is worth and I will write some more, but if it is not allright it is all right with me if you do not buy them as ever

Yours truley,
MISS K. L.

Wishes to Deliver Proof to Friends.

W. D. Boyce Co. Chicago, Ill.

Gentlemen:

Not wishing to take up to much of your valuable time, although. I am incloseing a short story of which if you find worth while you may publish without charge the name of this title is "My girl and her pa" Hoping that this will escape the waste basket and get into your paper the CHICAGO LEDGER as I want to prove to some of my friends that I can write a short story.

Yours very sincerely,
R. C.

Suggests Discussion Over Price of Manuscript.

W. D. Boyce Co.
Chicago, Ill.

Dear Sirs—:

I am sending you a story I wrote to see if you will not buy it from me to publish in your Chicago Legder or some of your other papers.

Read it and if you like it write and offer me a price for it and I will let you know if I will except your price or not.

My husband is a subscriber to your Chicago Ledger & Saturday Blade and we like them very much.

Hoping to hear from you soon

D. J. A.

But It's Really the Hardest Way in the World to Get Money.

June 25th, 1920.

W. D. Boyce Co.,
500-514 N. Dearborn St,
Chicago, Ill.

Gentleman—

Enclosed find a short story which if you think desirable you can publish in your paper if you pay me for it. I need a little money so I thought I would try to issue a few short stories and ask you'll to publish them, if they suit you. Hoping you will try to help me.

Very Thankfully,
MISS M. B.

Au Revoir Yourself!

The Editor
of the Chicago Ledger

Dear Sir:—

I am taking the opportunity of sending you one of my stories I hope you will have time to read it, and I am living in a hope of your accepting it. I am only sending the first part off it

(Concluded on Page 18.)

TWO BEAUTIFUL DOLLS FREE.

The Doll Department, 25 E. Lake St., Chicago, Ill., are making an offer to send two beautiful dolls free to any boy or girl who will show and distribute their beautifully colored pictures. If you want the dolls write today.—Adv.

Hot Off the Jokesmith's Anvil

The Difference.

"Esther," questioned the teacher of a member of the juvenile class, "what is the difference between electricity and lightning?"

"You don't have to pay nothing for lightning," came the prompt reply.

Cause and Effect.

"What do the poor creatures do who are bitten by snakes now that prohibition laws are so strict?"

"They don't need anything. The snakes got disgusted and quit biting folks."

In the Dark.

"They are going to Switzerland for their honeymoon."

"On account of the scenery?"

"On account of that seven mile tunnel."

Her Come-back.

He—Now that we are married, dear, I feel qualified to tell you that you have a few little defects.

She—Don't let them worry you, Clarence. It was those little defects that kept me from getting a better man than you are!

A Boston Conductor.

"Fare!"

The passenger gave no heed.

"Fare, please!"

Still the passenger was oblivious.

"By the ejaculatory term, 'Fare!'" said the conductor, "I imply no reference to the state of the weather, the complexion of the admirable blonde you observe in the contiguous seat, nor even to the quality of the service vouchsafed by this philanthropic corporation. I merely allude in a manner perhaps lacking in delicacy, but not in conciseness, to the monetary obligation set up by your presence in this car, and suggest that you liquidate."

At this point the passenger emerged from his trance.

A Great Recipe.

Rich Bachelor—My only ambition is to die poor.

Married Friend—And have you picked out the girl yet?

Figuring on the Cost.

"I see you use all kinds of motors for agricultural purposes."

"Yep," replied Farmer Corntossel. "And I'm not sure that the cost of gasoline isn't one of the things that are making farm products so dear."

He Knows.

"The farmer has his compensations."

"So he has, but you needn't go to him to find out what they are."

"No?"

"The man to see about that lives in a city flat."

Not Pleasing Lookout.

"I suppose you have fine prospects for your automobile trip."

"I hope not. The last batch of fines nearly ruined me."

At Bluff Beach.

Mrs. Myles—Read any of the late fiction?

Mrs. Styles—Oh, my, yes. I've just finished reading a letter from my husband.

Brain Teasers.

Numerical Enigma.

348—I am composed of 33 letters which form a quotation from Victor Hugo.

My 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 is a department of knowledge.

My 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 is superlatively lofty.

My 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33 is a place where perplexing questions are settled.

My 1, 2, 3, 24, 26, 25, 18, 31, 25, 13, 11, 23, 3 is a very destructive fire.

My 12, 27, 15, 6, 18, 14 is a vehicle.

Syncopated Name Transpositions.

349—1. Syncopate a man's name, transpose and find harm.

2. Syncopate a man's name, transpose and find an animal.

3. Syncopate a man's name, transpose and find anger.

4. Syncopate a man't name, transpose and find part of a boat.

5. Syncopate a man's name, transpose and find a tree.

6 Syncopate a man's name, transpose and find burdened.

7. Syncopate a man's name, transpose and find individual.

8. Syncopate a man's name, transpose and find a musical instrument.

Metamorphoses.

350—Change one given word to another by changing one letter at a time. Example: Change wood to coal in three moves. Answer: Wood, wool, cool, coal.

1. Change book to card in four moves.
2. Change camp to type in four moves.
3. Change call to hurt in four moves.
4. Change path to dose in four moves.

Four-word Square.

351—My first is plentiful in spring.
My second is the highest point of good.
My third are mischievous elves.
My fourth is found in the tree tops.

ANSWERS TO LAST WEEK'S PUZZLES.

344—Zigzag.

L O W
T E A
D E W
P I E
S E A

345—Enigma.

Inn—Slav—Pane—Y. Pennsylvania.

346—Double-headed Grain.

1. Rice-nice. 2. Samp-damp. 3 Corntorn. 4. Wheat-cheat. 5. Barley-parley. 6. Oats-pats.

347—Four-word Square.

S T O P
T O R E
O R A L
P E L T

It is not desired that readers send in the answers to the puzzles. They are printed simply as brain teasers, and the correct answers will be printed the following week.

An Exception.

"The evolution theory," said the professor, "is that we all came from monkeys."

"That's wrong," said the flea, biting him on his bald head, "I came from a dog."

Couldn't Do It.

"Did her husband die?"

"No, he resigned."

A Family Rule.

Hostess (at party)—Does your mother allow you to have two pieces of pie when you are at home, Willie?

Willie (who has asked for a second piece)—No, ma'am.

"Well, do you think she'd like you to have two pieces here?"

"Oh," confidently, "she wouldn't care. This isn't her pie."

Those Wags.

Bix—That's the fourth umbrella I've lost this year.

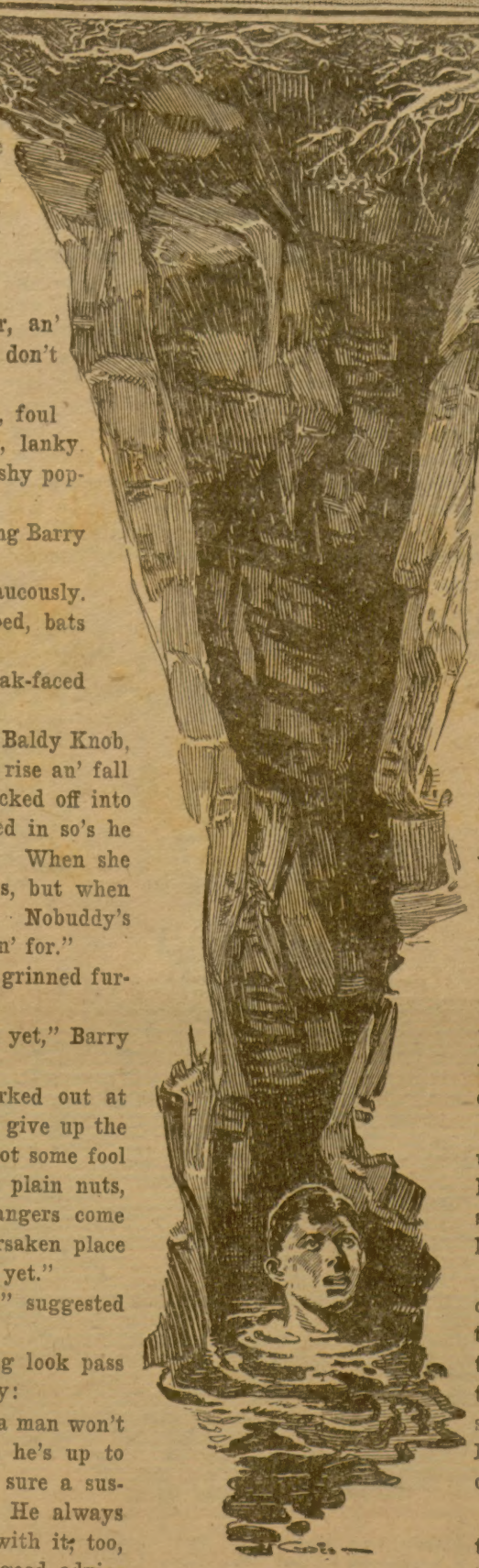
Dix—Your overhead expenses must be considerable.

$12.50 Goodyear Raincoat Free.

Goodyear Manufacturing Company, 4106 Goodyear Bldg., Kansas City, Mo., is making an offer to send a handsome raincoat free to one person in each locality who will show and recommend it to their friends. If you want one, write today.—Advertisement.

Waitin' Peeley's Vigil

by OSCAR H. ROESNER



"AN' SAY, look out you don't run up agin' ole Waitin' Peeley. If you want to keep a whole skin on your carcuss fight shy of that shack half ways up on Baldy Knob, jest above the ole Sky Rocket mine. He's a tough ole customer—reg'lar ole hell-houn', he is, if he gits the idee anybuddy's spyin' round. Take my advice, young city-feller, an' don't make no afternoon calls on ole Peeley. He don't serve no pink teas, he don't."

The evil-faced old mountaineer fondled his long, foul white beard and chuckled at his joke. His long, lanky slouching son, who possessed a receding chin and fishy pop-eyes, haw-hawed loudly.

"What's wrong with him, anyhow?" queried young Barry Larkin. "Is he a little off?"

"A little off, eh?" The old fellow guffawed raucously. "A little off! Ho, ho! Say, he's plumb nuts, locoed, bats in the belfry, non compos, an' then some."

Barry saw the old rascal wink slyly at his weak-faced son as he went on:

"For five year now he's been a-settin' up there on Baldy Knob, like a buzzard on a dead limb, watchin' the water rise an' fall in the ole mine. He's got a measurin' stick all nicked off into notches stuck down where part of the mine's caved in so's he can tell whether she be goin' up or comin' down. When she goes up a bit the ole cuss gits some cantankerous, but when it draps a mite he gits more hell-houndy 'n ever. Nobuddy's ever been able to figger out jest what he's a-watchin' for."

Again Barry saw him wink slyly at his son who grinned furtively.

"Maybe he knows the old mine has a pay streak yet," Barry volunteered.

"Nope, that ain't it, 'cause that mine wuz worked out at leas' twenty year ago. An' a few year after it wuz give up the water got in an's been in ever since. No, he jest got some fool notion into his ole bean an' it's stuck there. Jest plain nuts, he is, an' dang'rous, mighty dang'rous when strangers come peekin' about. Bein' 'way off there in that Godforsaken place nobuddy ain't ever lodged no complaint agin' him yet."

"Perhaps he's got good reasons for his actions," suggested Barry.

At this remark he thought he caught a knowing look pass between father and son. The elder hastened to say:

"I reckon he has, but it looks kind o' queer when a man won't have no dealin's with nobuddy. Looks a bit like he's up to somethin' that ain't altogether 'bove board. He's sure a suspicious ole cuss, an' fights shy of all neighbors. He always carries an 'ole Winchester an' he's mighty handy with it, too, let me tell you. If you wuz to ask me for some good advice now, I'd jest naturally tell you to keep away from ole Waitin' Peeley's diggin's, unless you air hankerin' after trouble. 'Leave me alone an' I leave you alone' seems to be his motter. He's jest plain nuts, that's all. Got water on the brain, as you might say." The grizzled old fellow chuckled unctuously at his jest.

"Keep Away From Old Waitin' Peeley's Diggin's, Unless You Air Hankerin' After Trouble."

"And say," burst in the long, lanky youth, "if you happen to run across a fine, red-cheeked young chicken up there in some lonesome spot don't go to makin' no goo-goo eyes at it or you'll think you've run onto a catamount 'fore she gets thru with you. That's old Waitin' Peeley's girl, and she ain't got no use for no young buck of the male sect anymore 'n her dad has."

At his son's warning the old man threw back his head and haw-hawed uproariously; then he added soberly:

"That's plumb right, an' if you want to come back to civilization with a whole skin why jest mind what Zeke's tellin' you, 'cause Zeke he knows." Again the old fellow went off into spasms of mirth. "Zeke got kinda smitten on the sweet young thing when he chancet to run onto her one day up there in the hills. He tried to make them goo-goos—as he calls 'em—at her an' got some quite persistent in his 'tentions. But after she landed on him like a screamin' wildcat an' ole Peeley had sent a few bullets in his direction, Zeke wuz mighty glad to git away with only a few scratches a ornamentin' his phiz. He's got a gal in the valley now that's a heap more to his likin'. Then I guess that mountain gal is too highfalutin for Zeke, anyhow. The report is that ole Peeley's made a scholard out of her; teached her book-larnin', he bein' one of them eddicated cusses himself."

FOR a brief space cunning and hatred played over the man's coarse, red features, then hiding them swiftly behind a sullen grin, he added:

"So young city-feller if you're lookin' for a nice quiet vacation my advice is to keep right straight ahead when you come to Rushin' Creek. Don't take that turn to the left, an' then you'll miss meetin' up with that ole he hell-houn' Waitin' Peeley."

He laughed evilly, mopped his brow with a big red bandana, stroked his long foul beard and called back as he and his son moved off: "Better stick to the main trail, young feller, an take it slow an' easy as it's onusual close an' hot today."

Barry watched them as they slipped swiftly into the underbrush out of sight. Their method of disappearing had something sinister about it. A precious pair of scalawags and not desirable associates in a lonely spot, he decided as he urged Jerry, his laden burro, forward.

After a bit he came to Rushing Creek, but instead of crossing it and following the main trail, he turned to the left and followed the dim trail along its bank. Soon the trail grew steeper and less distinct, proving difficult to follow. Only previous training and an inborn instinct for reading the signs of the wild aright enabled Barry to follow it, even tho it kept the general direction of the source of the roaring stream.

Altho the old mountaineer was right in his assumption that Barry was from the city he failed to note that the young fellow was thoroly versed in ways of the wild. An engineer by calling, for the last year Barry had been cooped up in an office in San Francisco. Now he was off for a month's outing in the Sierras before taking up a job in the open again.

Despite the exuberance of youth and his joyous exultation in the wild outdoors he soon found progress slow because of the extreme heat which became more oppressive as he went on. He knew that such sultriness was altogether uncommon for that altitude. At first he thought it due to forest fires, but on topping a rise that gave an extended view he could see no sign of smoke in any direction. Except for a slight haze the atmosphere was clear. The air, because of the extreme heat, was heavily freighted with the warm, resinous

Trending Water, Barry Attempted to Take His Bearings. Around Him Loomed High, Black Rugged Walls.

"A Precious Pair of Scalawags and Not Desirable Associates," Was Barry's Verdict.

scent of pines, a balm that Barry breathed deep into his lungs with exultant gusto.

The way soon became wilder and more difficult. It required constant urging on Barry's part to keep the burro, Jerry, lazy by nature and a foe to haste at all times, on the faint upward trail which at length left the boisterous creek and led to the top of a smart divide, followed the ridge for some distance and then wound down along the other side, finally coming to a bluff that gave an outlook over a broad shallow valley.

HERE Jerry stopped short. Barry cast his eyes over the prospect before him. Away across, by some ridges at the head of the valley, he discerned a few ramshackle buildings. Just beyond rose a small mountain, bare at the top, but wooded along its lower slopes. He knew it at once for Baldy Knob and near the site of the old Sky Rocket mine. Beyond the mountains towered up, ridge after ridge, those in the distance patched with snow. Here and there on the opposite side of the valley Barry made out an old road, overgrown and obliterated in places, that had served the mine in the days of its prosperity.

He turned his eyes back to the old mine site. All looked desolate, deserted and lonely. The descending sun threw long shadows, blotting out part of the surroundings. After a careful search he made out a cabin clinging to the side of Baldy Knob. He saw that it commanded quite a broad outlook and held most of the mine in view. After a long and thoro survey he turned Jerry half about, led him up over the ridge and down the other side, completely out of sight of Baldy Knob.

At dusk he made camp at the foot of a wooded bluff, cooked supper and spread his blankets on freshly-cut fir boughs and giant ferns. Darkness soon settled about him. The heat still remained oppressive. No breath ran thru the pines above him.

Disinclined to slumber because of the heat Barry finally climbed back to the top of the divide and looked across the valley toward the old mine. Thru the darkness a point of light shone. He figured that it was from the cabin on old Baldy Knob. For a long time he watched it, idly wondering what purpose lay behind the five-year vigil of the old man the two men he had met that day called Waltin' Peeley. "He's jest plain nuts," he remembered was the phrase the old sinner of a father had used in expressing an opinion, but somehow Barry felt in his soul that the true explanation did not lie there, even tho such appellation might rightly describe the old man's mental state. Undoubtedly there was a screw loose somewhere, he decided, but ignorant of the whole matter tho he was, he surmised that it was not wholly in the old man's head.

After a bit Barry gave up wondering about the matter and lazily began summing up the reasons why he had turned up the creek instead of following the main trail straight ahead. He knew it was not with the hope of solving the mystery hinted at by the two sinister personages he had met that day, interesting and attractive tho mystery was to a normal young man. It was not because of any vision conjured up by the terms "red-cheeked young chicken" or "catamount" that the weak-faced youth had uttered. Not that a pretty girl, especially a close-to-nature one like that the uncouth youth had described, failed to attract him, but so far he was heart-whole and fancy-free, the girl of his dreams still in some distant, half-guessed realm of the romantic future.

No, the real reason lay in the fact that the old mountaineer had tried to scare him away from the mine, had tried to say what trail he should follow in those old mountains. Yes, that was the very reason why he had turned to the left when his intentions had been to keep straight ahead. He resented any man's telling him just where and how he should come and go. That was why he had turned to the left.

The hot night wore on and Barry still sat on the lone, pine-crested ridge lazily wondering of various things, the distant point of light ever drawing his straying thoughts back to the cabin and its occupants there on the side of lonely old Baldy Knob. Finally he drowsed, his mind hazy. Suddenly he sat stiffly erect, wide awake. From the direction in which that point of light glowed came faintly a long wailing cry, weird and unearthly, yet a woman's scream, Barry decided. He listened, tense. Again it sounded, then a deep silence settled over the hot, pulseless night. And tho he listened long, the cry did not come again. The point of light still shone without change across that silent, pregnant gulf of wilderness. And then Barry suddenly realized that what he had heard was not a woman's scream. Reassured, yet not altogether at ease, he slipped quietly down to his camp and sought his blankets.

BARRY slept fitfully thruout the remainder of the torrid night. He arose late to face listlessly the same sultry weather of the previous day—more sultry still, if anything. He vaguely wondered at the reason of it. At the altitude at which he was he should have had a comparatively cool night. He noticed, too, that Jerry seemed affected by the heat and strangely disquiet. After a lazy breakfast, the sultriness increasing, he felt no inclination to move on, and after puttering aimlessly about for an hour or more he threw himself down impatiently on his rumpled bed in the shade of the craggy bluff.

Presently he heard a slight sound above him as tho made by some lurking creature. A pebble came bounding down past him. He lay very still and listened alertly, but caught no further sound of movement. He concluded that a deer was browsing in the shrubbery above him, but tho the thought of fresh venison tempted him, the heat rendered him too inert for investigation.

"Don't You Dare Touch Me!" She Half Screamed. "I—I Can Take Care of Myself."

A little later a curious sense of espionage haunted him—he felt as tho some sentient thing was spying upon him. He shifted uneasily, but did not get up. And then for several terrifying seconds he thought the end of the world had come. The old earth vibrated, rocked, trembled and gyrated in dizzying jerks; rocks ground together groaningly on the hillside or toppled from the cliff, trees swayed and crashed, dust arose, and the air grew thick with a sulphurous odor.

At the first vibration Barry leaped unsteadily to his feet and backed against the bluff to escape the bounding rocks. Thru a haze of dust he saw poor Jerry cowering under a rain of flying missiles, and above the din he heard the frightened beast's wild bray of disapproval. Then above all a shrill, fear-stricken scream rang out. At the same moment the contorting earth gave one vast, sickening, convulsive heave and was still. And then to Barry's utter consternation and amazement, almost to his very feet rolled a bloody, disheveled form—that of a woman, a young and comely woman, roughly dressed.

For one long stupefied moment he gazed aghast then sprang to succor the stricken one. But before he could lay a hand on her she rose to her feet with a sudden lithe swiftness and stood swaying unsteadily, blood streaming down her face. From her dark-blue eyes blazed scorn and hatred.

"Don't you dare touch me," she half screamed. "I—I can take care of myself."

And as Barry recoiled slightly at her sharp defiance, he saw her take two or three tottering steps, pause weakly, stagger a pace or two, then abruptly turn toward him, her high defiant pride oozing slowly from her. Her beautiful face, framed in the glorious mass of her fallen hair, grew wan and white save where the flowing blood upon one bruised cheek stood out in bold contrast. A pitiful, hopeless look swept her as she realized her helplessness; her eyes closed once or twice spasmodically, and then with a tired little sigh she crumpled in an unconscious heap.

BARRY leaped for his canteen, grabbed a rag from the rubble in his half-wrecked camp, poured water over it, knelt and bathed the girl's face and brow, stanching the flow of blood from the bruise on the cheek. At length her long-lashed eyelids fluttered, opened slowly, and then she stared uncertainly up at Barry. Presently understanding gleamed in her eyes' translucent depths and with a sudden despairful energy she knocked the canteen from his hands and beat him wildly with her firm, young fists, crying out: "You leave me alone, I tell you. I don't want no man to touch me. Leave me alone or Pap'll fix you."

Her sudden mad energy expended itself almost as swiftly as it came. A spasm of pain shot across her pale bruised face, and giving a sharp little cry her tense body slowly relaxed. Keeping his arm under her, Barry sheepishly regained the gurgling canteen. Gently he bathed the white drawn face and the hard hot little hands. Soon the eyelids fluttered feebly, a quiver ran thru the lithe body, then the girl gave a long sigh and opened wide her fine clear eyes that reminded Barry of two mirroring mountain pools.

He gathered the still quivering form into his strong young arms, took a few swift strides and placed it lightly on the back of the disconsolate and rock-battered Jerry who stood immobile with all four feet firmly braced as tho defying mother earth to do her worst in her next tantrum.

With a punch in the ribs and a smart command Barry headed Jerry for the top of the adjacent divide, carefully guarding the girl's body, which sagged inertly against him, from contact with clutching bush or drooping limb. Slowly but steadily the burro climbed, gained the top of the divide, then began carefully picking his way down along the other side, following the faint trail unerringly.

Everywhere the earth bore signs on its surface of the recent cataclysmic pains that had possessed it. But despite the debris that obliterated or obstructed the trail in places carefully and unconcernedly the imperturbable Jerry picked his way along, clinging as closely as the recent catastrophe allowed, to the old trail.

Upon reaching the bed of the valley Barry felt a sudden tightening of the lax form against him. Only by a quick contraction of his encircling arm did he forestall the evident determination of the girl to

(Continued on Page 14.)

The Looting of the Limited

By Franklin Stringfellow

"Who Hit Me?"

The Opening Chapters

DANNY KRELL, convicted of a crime of which he was innocent, after serving his term was frequently suspected of being the leader in sensational train robberies, especially by the newspapers, which frequently paraded his name in large type in connection with their reports of such robberies. Danny tired of being their "goat" and resolved to enter the game if he must bear the name. He sought "Long George," a notorious train robber, and the pair planned a "big trick."

MR. TAYLOR, a mysterious and active little man, passenger in one of the Pullmans which constituted the B. &. O. Limited, was among the victims stripped of their valuables. After the robbery he volunteered to go up ahead and do his utmost to recover some of the loot, as well as to avenge an insult tendered him by Long George's pal, who was also somewhat short in stature. Some one was thrown out of the express car into the wayside bushes, being badly bruised. The man clung to a bag supposed to contain either money or jewels.

MISS REARDON, another passenger in the Pullman, looked upon the little man, Mr. Taylor, as considerable of a hero, inasmuch as he promised to do his utmost to recover her money and jewelry.

This story began in No. 39, the Ledger for Sept. 25. Back copies may be obtained from our agents or newsdealers.

CHAPTER VI.

THE burly, red-faced desk sergeant was speaking over the phone to the Gazette, Plattsburg's progressive morning paper. The city editor had asked him a question, and he was trying his best to answer it.

"Sure! I heard something about it. Nothing very much. Switch engine broke loose down in the yards somewhere, and raised particular Ned. Somehow it got out on the main line, came skooting past the depot at sixty miles an hour, and missed the turn. Yes—jumped the track right south of the depot and went into the ditch. No. Nobody hur—Wait a minute—cut off—I'll call you later. Here comes the ambulance."

This was the sergeant's first version of the affair. Ten minutes later he again grabbed the phone and called up the Gazette office.

"Hey—Jimmie? Say, tear up what I told you a minute ago. All wrong! It's Number Seven that went into the ditch—What?—Number Seven; the big engine that pulls the Limited on the up trips. Begins to look like the train's been robbed; and we got the guy that did it. No, he didn't go down in the ditch with the engine. He jumped, or got spilled out, or something. Anyway, he ain't hurt none to speak of—just a bump on the head."

The Limited had been "stuck up."

This theory quickly crystallized into a certainty when the unconscious prisoner was, immediately upon his arrival at the station, recognized as an old offender but lately escaped from prison. The news spread about town like wildfire. Great excitement prevailed in Plattsburg that night. Without loss of time the B. & O. fired an engine and dispatched it to the rescue of the stranded train. Besides the regular crew it carried two passengers, a Gazette reporter and a police detective. Both were disgusted with their assignments.

"Just a trip for nothing," mourned the detective. "The loot's at the bottom of the crick with the engine—that is," he added grumpily, "if it ain't burned up in the cab. I don't see what they expect me to find!"

"Me neither," confessed the reporter, inelegantly. "They got the robber—some tough looker, that guy—and if they'd looked around a little I bet they'd found the stuff somewhere near the spot they picked him up. We won't find anything much. Just a busted safe, and a gang of sobbing lady-folks and sore men; all of them threatening suit for the indignity they have suffered, the money they have lost, and—oh, a thousand things. I've been there before, and b'lieve me, there's nothing to it. I told the boss I could just as well meet the train when it pulled in to the depot and get the story, but—— Got a match?" The reporter subsided into sleepy silence.

Both the reporter and the detective now freely admitted that they were wrong. In fact, tho they did find the safe "busted," and angry passengers in plenty, still, a condition prevailed which tabulated the robbery as unique in the annals of railway crime. They found the safe, for instance, a more complete wreck than they had figured; and the passengers, while giving plenty of evidence of being "sore," still, were far more puzzled than angry. And the contents of the safe? Some mystery there also.

IN THE first place, they came upon the express car much sooner than they had expected. Less than three miles from the city they found it, lying upon its side just off the tracks.

The scene of the robbery!

This was the reporter's idea, and after the others had made due inspection, they agreed with him.

"The guy stopped the engine here and cracked the safe," said the engineer. "That's certain; but what tipped the car over? The wheels seem all right."

Again the reportorial mind paved the way for an answer to the conundrum.

"Give me a lantern and a piece of rope," suddenly barked the representative of the Gazette.

These articles in hand, he agilely mounted the upturned side of the express car. Quickly he made fast the rope to the lighted lantern, and thru the wide-open door that gaped blackly up at him, he lowered it into the interior. Ah! One glance sufficed.

Very shortly he returned with his report. "The crook used too much juice," he explained to them. "About a ton too much. Blew the safe open, and lifted the car off the track."

Should a man be left to guard the wreck? Instantly the idea was hooted. "What's the idea in guarding a box that's already been cracked?" the fireman wanted to know.

On board the Pullman car, Olathe, the reporter found much the same conditions prevailing he had expected, but that it was not the same old story he very quickly took cognizance. The familiar elements were there all right, but so were others, not so familiar.

The fact that two robbers participated in the hold-up instead of one already under arrest, promised a mystery. Where was the other one?

"We'll find the stuff on the little guy if we ever catch him," was his outspoken verdict.

But when the real mystery of the evening was explained to him, he was not so certain.

Miss Reardon, unable to contain her anxiety, had acquainted the rest of the car with the heroic action of Mr. Taylor, and they, in turn, nearly chanted it to the reporter, the detective, and any one else whom they thought might be of help in solving the mystery.

Briefly, Mr. Taylor, a brave little individual, a fellow passenger, and fellow sufferer, had, but a short time after the robbery, sallied forth, gun in hand and stern resolve in his eye, to the rescue of his and their property. And he had not yet returned!

CHAPTER VII.

BY MIDNIGHT the wrecking crew had righted the express car and swung it back upon the tracks. Thirty minutes later it stood on the siding in front of the depot, and a force of clerks inside were busily checking over the contents of the ruined safe, and comparing it with a list of what normally it should have contained.

And, as they checked, their amazement grew. Not a thing missing! Money, several healthy-looking packages of it, valuables of all description, jewelry, and—wait a miuute! The clerk in charge of the work suffered a distinct shock. Where were those papers? With fingers that trembled he shuffled them over. Amid a storm of protest he ordered a recheck of the entire business. Then he gave it up and turned over his report to the express manager. And when the express manager had sufficiently recovered, he lost small time in sending a copy of the report to the police station.

The police captain read the report, and smiled. Not at the report, but because the news contained in the report welded the last link in a chain of evidence; it turned a theory which had been growing in the captain's brain for the past three or four hours into a certainty.

"Sergeant." A moment later the captain strolled out in the office and laid the report under the sergeant's nose. "What you think of this, serg? Just one guess now."

The sergeant quickly absorbed the contents of the slip of paper.

"Danny Krell did it," he said without hesitation.

The captain nodded. "Sure," he said. "Certain. Who else but he would have staged such a robbery? Who else but he would have carefully opened the safe, taken from it the thirty thousand worth of diamonds, leaving all the rest of the stuff he might have taken untouched, and then, afterwards, blow the thing up in a bungling fashion merely to help cover his tracks?"

"Nobody on earth!"

"Another Danny Krell job."

This seemed the concentric opinion of those claiming knowledge of such things. The Gazette headed its big story with the usual streamer caption, the police and detective forces grew hoarse in reiterating the point, and the B. & O. posted a five hundred dollar reward for the capture of the daring little criminal.

But where was he? And where were the missing diamonds? And what had become of Mr. Taylor?

The old police captain sighed and shook his head. "If that jumpingjack in yonder ever comes out of it, maybe we'll learn something," he said to the desk sergeant.

The "jumping-jack," however, seemed to give but poor promise of "coming out of it." Between white sheets in the hospital ward where he had been removed shortly after his arrival at the station, Long George for several hours gave every indication of leaving this earth and its manifold troubles behind. Twice the doctor gave him up.

"Concussion of the brain," he said gravely. "He can't possibly live thru the night."

In spite of which the patient not only lived thru the night, but by morning had rallied considerably. Along about 8 o'clock he opened his eyes and gazed about him.

Quickly the nurse stepped to the door and returned with the captain.

The prisoner eyed the newcomer uncertainly. "Who hit me?" he again inquired.

THE captain drew up a chair beside the cot. "You wer'n't hit," he explained gently. "The engine jumped the track and spilled you out."

"That so?" The lengthy outlaw frowned and seemingly considered. Then his face brightened. "I remember now," he said. "It was going like the devil, wasn't it?"

"It certainly was," agreed the captain with a smile. "How did it happen, anyway?"

Again the outlaw considered. "I must have pulled the wrong contraption," he finally answered.

"Pulled the wrong contraption?"

"Yes," the prisoner nodded. "You see, I don't know much about running an engine, and—say, mister, what was I doing on that engine anyway? I don't seem to remember."

The captain's heart sank within him. "Crazy as a loon," he said to himself. Aloud he asked:

"What became of your partner?"

"Jack, you mean?"

"Yes."

"Why—let's see—oh, yes; I got it now! Jack fell off—or the other one fell off; I don't know which."

The police officer's spirits began to rise. He was about to learn something concerning the mysterious Mr. Taylor.

"Did you see this other man?" he asked with considerable interest.

"Yes."

"What was he doing?"

"He wasn't doing anything. Jack was sitting on him."

"What!"

"It Sure Is, Mister," He Agreed Heartily. "And It'll Be Worse'n That If It Starts to Rain. Come Down Here, Won't You, and Lend a Hand."

"Yes. Jack and he was fighting, and he yelled to me to start the engine going, and I did, and——"

The captain tried another tack. "Now, about the money and the diamonds; where are they?"

Long George shook his head. "I don't know what you're driving at, mister," he declared blankly. "I ain't got any money, or diamonds either."

The captain scratched his grizzled head. "Surely you remember the robbery, don't you?" he urged gently. "You and Danny Krell held up the Limited last evening. Remember?"

A sudden dawning intelligence flickered over the saturnine features of the prisoner. "I remember," he exclaimed interestedly. "I remember now. Only it wasn't last night. It was five years ago. The next day I got nabbed for it and they sent me over the road."

The captain gave it up. As a last resort he hurried back to his office and secured a sheet of paper bearing the printed likeness of the celebrated and much sought for Danny Krell. Returning, he spread it suddenly before the prisoner. "Who is this man?" he asked.

The prisoner studied the print with interest. "Seems like I know the lad," he confessed finally, "but I ain't sure."

"This is the likeness of your friend and partner, Danny Krell," the officer explained with great positiveness.

"My partner—Jack?" Again the outlaw closely examined the print. "Yes, that's him all right. That's his picture. I'd know them squinty eyes anywhere."

Back in the office the captain passed the few crumbs of newly acquired knowledge to a reporter for the evening paper. "I've just sent a couple of patrolmen off down the tracks in search of the bodies," he further informed the scribe.

THE reporter thoughtfully lit and puffed at his cigarette for a moment. "Some tough luck that little fellow, Taylor, played in, wasn't it? What do you think, captain? Reckon he got killed?"

The captain nodded. "Sure thing," he answered. "Danny threw him out the door—or maybe both he and Danny rolled and fought and scuffled around the floor until perhaps they both rolled out at once."

Further conversation was interrupted by entrance of an expressman. In his arms he bore a wooden box of medium proportions. "Heavy for its size, captain," he grunted, "I guess it's auto parts——"

"Take it out to the garage then. Sam'll sign for it."

"But it's marked 'Personal. To be opened only by the official in charge of the Plattsburg police station.'"

"Reckon that's me, then; here, I'll sign."

Thoughtfully the captain strolled over to the table and looked down at the box. "Now who's E. P. Taylor, I wonder," he said, reading the name of the consignee. "Seems to me——"

Sudden excitement caused the reporter to hurl the remainder of his cigarette across the room. "It's the loot!" he exclaimed, hoarsely. Taylor made good after all. The watches, money, diamonds—everything. I bet—where the blazes is a hatchet?"

Ten minutes later found the captain and the reporter gazing blankly at each other. On a chair reposed the splintered remains of a wooden box half filled with excelsior packing; over its back was draped an empty canvas sack. The table was covered with leathern wallets and scintillating treasure.

"Read that note over again, Tom," suggested the captain, finally. "See if he says anything about the diamonds."

Obediently the reporter re-read the note which had been found inside the box. "Not a darn thing, Cap; he don't mention them at all. He says: 'You will find it all here with the exception of certain articles of value which I know to be the property of Miss Reardon, a young lady of my acquaintance,' he read. 'Those, I took the liberty to remove from the sack, and express directly to her address.'"

"What did he want to do that for, I wonder?" said the captain.

"That," said the reporter smiling, "that action, to my mind, supplies a motive for this Mr. Taylor's rash undertaking. From what I have heard, this Miss Reardon is very prepossessing in appearance, and——"

But the captain was married, and growing old; and had a large family, and romantic arguments held no place in his thoughts.

"Humph," he cut in practically. "I wonder, now, if that wasn't a part of the game. "I wonder if he didn't send the diamonds to her also?"

CHAPTER VIII.

"FIVE HUNDRED DOLLARS reward for Danny Krell: Dead or Alive!"

This announcement, together with another of like amount for the return of the missing diamonds, brought many sleuths to Plattsburg. Also, a good many citizens of that prosperous little city were moved by the announcements to forego for the time being their usual vocations, and try their amateur hands at detecting. Together, they, the sleuths and the amateurs, worried the police officers nearly to distraction.

The captain, at first glad for outside help that might lead to the capture of the criminal, greeted his visitors genially, and did all in his power to aid them. Half a day of it, however, brought his naturally peppery temperment to the surface. Then he caused to be hung in the lobby of the station a printed likeness of the missing train robber, and met his visitors with, "that's his picture hanging out there against the wall. Take a good look at it and go out and find the gent. He's somewhere."

And really, that was all any one knew of the case. One of the passengers had obligingly come around to the station and signed papers that positively identified Long George as one of the robbers, and Long George, in turn, had identified the print as the likeness of his partner in the holdup. But what did that avail the authorities? Long George, the only one who might have thrown light upon the subject, had been sent to the State asylum, a babbling lunatic. No wonder the captain grew touchy whenever the case was mentioned.

And the rumors! Hardly were the rewards posted when letters, long distance calls, and telegrams came pouring into the police station in an endless stream. Apparently every other farmer in that part of the State believed that he had seen the party wanted, or else suspected one of his farm hands of being the man.

The police were early sick of the case. And after two of them had more or less carefully searched the B. & O. right of way for the ten miles between Plattsburg and the scene of the holdup, and found nothing, they gave it up as a bad job.

"Either they lit so hard that they buried themselves, or they lit so easy that it didn't hurt them any to speak of, and they got away under their own steam," they reported to the sergeant.

The sergeant replied with a remark that shows how at this time the Danny Krell case was regarded by the authorities of Plattsburg.

"To hell with Danny Krell," he grunted sourly.

AMONG the many who saw fit to spend their spare time—and some they could not well spare—in amateurish attempts to secure the reward, was Charley Browne, night operator at Plattsburg.

Charley was only 20 in years, and ambitious, and he didn't propose spending the rest of his life telegraph operating. He wished with all his heart to study law, and with that goal in view, he had been saving his money for the past two years. But the money mounted slowly; much too slowly to suit the ambitious and impatient Charley. At least another year would elapse before his funds would reach the height of necessary to meet the tuition of the famous University he had chosen as his Alma Mater; that is, unless, in some miraculous manner he could earn some side money.

"That five hundred would put me right on my feet," he remarked to Streeter, the station cop, as he hung the poster sheet announcing the reward in the upper half of the ticket-office window.

Streeter grunted. "There's a thousand blamed fools looking for that money right now," he remarked, discouragingly. "Don't hold your breath until you get it."

But Charley was young and not easily discouraged. And besides, as previously stated, he needed the money.

"It would land me in school—pronto," he answered gaily. "Believe I'll take a whirl at it anyway."

Charley had read in the evening paper the somewhat garbled and vague statements of Long George concerning his missing companion, and during the long reaches of the night, when not otherwise employed, he spent the time in mulling over the known facts of the case, and trying to figure out from them a few of the unknown facts. By morning he had worked out the following theories:

That the robber—and probably Mr. Taylor also—had been thrown thru the open door of the express car as it lurched drunkenly around the curve. That Mr. Taylor, victorious over the outlaw, had hurled him thru the door, and then, in some miraculous manner, had himself escaped injury. That the outlaw had murdered Mr. Taylor, thrown his body from the car, and then himself had escaped injury in some inexplainable manner. That the robber had escaped with both the bag of loot and the diamonds, and had returned the loot simply as a blind. Charley allowed himself to become quite excited over this last theory until he chanced to remember that Mr. Taylor—or whoever had written the note—had confessed to opening the bag, securing the articles taken from Miss Reardon, and expressing them to her himself. Would a dirty little tough of a robber do that?"

"I'm a bum detect," said Charley to himself, crumpling up the sheet of paper he had been working on, and throwing it into the wastebasket. "But I'm going to try for it anyway," he muttered. "It's a cinch he's somewhere. And he's not dead, or some of that gang would have found his body before now."

And try it he did. Immediately his time was up, Charley ate his breakfast at the depot lunch counter, and hied himself forth to the search. He invited Streeter to accompany him, but that fat, middle-aged individual flatly refused the invitation. Not only did he refuse, but he loudly hooted the idea.

"What! After a string of people and two of the force have kept them tracks hot all day yesterday without finding anything! Not I!"

So Charley made the trip alone. "It's all to gain and nothing to lose but my sleep," he had retorted to Streeter's grumblings.

Ask Streeter about it now, and he may declare that Charley deliberately cheated him out of half that reward; that Charley, when the crucial moment came, deliberately sent him—Streeter—off on a wild goose chase, but don't believe him. The fact is that Streeter was simply too slow to—to catch cold, as it were.

CHARLEY left the depot at 6 o'clock. Some two hours later found him pausing to mop off the perspiration that beaded his brow. It was hot; the prospects were that it would be much hotter by noon.

"Wonder if Streeter wasn't right after all," he said to himself.

He had covered four miles of the distance. A mile back he had passed the spot famous as the brief resting place of the overturned express car. He had intended searching this locality quite thoroly—the diamonds might easily have lost themselves here. But apparently others entertained the same idea. Early as was the hour several motor cars were resting easily about the place, while men, women and children, a full score of them, were busily engaged, with sticks, and canes, and parasols, in turning over the tramped grass and weeds that grew thereabout.

Charley had passed on without stopping. But he might as well have tarried, for, tho he had kept his eyes wide open on the straight stretches of track, and had with painstaking care investigated several curves, he had found absolutely nothing.

Greatly disgusted he entertained a great notion to turn back, and only for the dogged determination that was part of Charley's character, he most certainly would have done so.

"If I go back now, I'll kick myself tomorrow for what I may have missed," he argued. At a slower pace he pressed forward.

Five more miles of unfruitful search, and Charley gave it up. There still remained a mile to the scene of the holdup, but he figured that it would be worse than useless to search it.

"The engine certainly went more than a mile before they tumbled off," he reasoned to himself.

So he faced about, and feeling very much disgusted with himself, he started to foot the nine hot dusty miles back to the city. Despite the fact that he knew it to be useless, his eyes searched minutely the neighborhood of each curve that he passed. He just couldn't help it. It had been his pet theory that the man—or men—had been thrown from the car at a curve.

And then, as he was traversing a perfectly straight stretch of track—a fill, with considerable of a depression on either side—he saw, at the foot of the left-hand slope, and almost hidden from sight in a clump of bushes, a something which dispelled forever most of his belief in his theories. Uttering a loud cry of triumph, he plunged recklessly down the embankment.

CHAPTER IX.

BEFORE closing his eyes the evening previous, in sleep, the little man had timed himself to awaken at a certain time, and within fifteen minutes of that time he did awake. At a quarter past 4 he opened his eyes, and instantly he was in full control of his senses. Very carefully, so that no creak of the springs or joints of the cheap little bed that had rested him should betray his movements, he rose to a sitting posture. All about him was pitchy darkness, but this fact, so far from causing him worry, was grateful to him. His only regret was that the darkness was to be of such short duration. Within the hour it would be broad daylight. Cautiously he slipped from the bed and across the room to the clothes closet.

The darkness interfered with his project not at all. Last night before retiring, he had figured it all out, and now, all that remained to be done was to guard against making a noise.

The closet door was open; he had left it so, for the hinges squeaked. He reached inside and without hesitation secured several articles. Tho he could not see them, he nevertheless knew them to be a suit of clothes, black, and more or less worn; a black stiff hat a size or so too large for him, and a pair of yellow shoes. In these garments the little man, after carrying them to the center of the

(Continued on Page 16.)

The South Wind and the Sun

O the South Wind and the Sun!
How each loved the other one—
Full of fancy—full of folly—
Full of jollity and fun!
How they romped and ran about,
Like two boys when school is out,
With glowing face, and lisping lip,
Low laugh and lifted shout!

And the South Wind—he was dressed
With a ribbon round his breast
That floated, flapped and fluttered
In a riotous unrest,
And a drapery of mist
From the shoulder and the wrist,
Flowing backward with the motion
Of the waving hand he kissed.

And the Sun had on a crown
Wrought of gilded thistle-down,
And a scarf of velvet vapor,
And a raveled-rainbow gown;
And his tinsel-tangled hair,
Tossed and lost upon the air,
Was glossier and flossier
Than any anywhere.

And the South Wind's eyes were two
Little dancing drops of dew
As he puffed his cheeks and pursed his lips.
And blew and blew and blew!
And the Sun's—like diamond-stone,
Brighter yet than ever known,
As he knit his brows and held his breath,
And shone and shone and shone!

And this pair of merry fays
Wandered thru the summer days;
Arm in arm they went together
Over heights of morning haze—
Over slanting slopes of lawn
Then went on and on and on,
Where the daisies look like star-tracks
Trailing up and down the dawn.

—JAMES WHITCOMB RILEY.

Aunt Mandy's Mating

By Catherine Rhodes Davis

EACH recurring Monday morning brings to the busy housewife the same routine of duties, gathering up the laundry, ordering groceries, and clearing away the disorder from Sunday's free-and-easy life and general take-no-thought-of-the-morrow policy; so that, even tho it may not be washday for milady, it is, nevertheless, a very busy morning.

For many years, I have looked forward to its coming with interest and pleasure, because, with it, there also came Aunt Mandy's smiling face—Aunt Mandy, turbaned and broadsided, her white teeth always gleaming, and her own good nature fairly beaming forth from her dusky face—Aunt Mandy whose proud boast had ever been that "nobody in ten States' could wash and iron for the white folks like old Mandy."

"Howdy, honey," she said on one particular Monday. "How you does dis mawnin'? Feelin' good? Dat's fine! Dat's de way I laks to fin' yo'. No'm, I ain't so pyert, myse'f. Dat good-fernothin' Lize-Jane, she done had de cholry-marvels all night, an' kep' me up awaitin' on her till I'se mos' tuckered out dis mawnin'.

"Dat's a offul purty way yo' got o' fixin' yo' hair up, chile. Hit makes yo' look so indifferent."

"Yes," I replied; "I'm glad you like it. Did you go to church last night?"

"Ya-as, honey, an' we sho' did have a fine discohse, a fine discohse, honey! Brer Abram, he's a mighty smaht niggah."

"What was his text, do you remember?"

"He's sich a pohtable man, honey. When he riz up dar in de sanctimony, wid his long black princess coat, I sez to myse'f: 'He sho' is a han'some niggah.' Ya-as'm, I 'membahs de tex'. He sez: 'Deahly beloveds, my tex', it am a easy un. It am one yo' can all 'membah, an' hit's one I wants yo' all to live by. Hit am dis: "Be hones', an' fraud no man." Chile, dat niggah sho' did preach frum dat tex'. I disremembers now jes' where yo'll fin' hit in de Book; but he sho' did tell dem niggahs 'bout dey se'ves. He cum along home side o' me, an' he went to tellin' me 'bout how mizable a life he wuz a leadin' since Mis' Abram, she done went an' died from assumption uv de lungs. I tole him go 'long off wid his lonesomeness, I ain't bothered 'bout hit," and her broad sides shook with laughter at the recollection.

Presently she proceeded: "You is a Christian, ain't yo', honey?"

To which I replied: "Yes, I try to be, Aunt Mandy; but why do you ask?" I was hardly prepared for her answer.

"I knowed it, honey. You' 'pearance insured to me dat you wuz."

The next Monday brought her, turbaned and smiling, with her usual Monday morning salutation: "Howdy, honey; how yo' does dis mawnin'?"

"Quite well, thank you, and how are you? Did you go to church last evening?"

"Honey, I'se feelin' like de mawnin' stah! I sho' did go to meetin', chile, an' Mist' Abram, he axed my comp'ny home ag'in." Here followed a broadside of laughter.

"Dat fool niggah, he say it ain't good fo' man to be 'lone. He done been a tellin' me kyant nobody cook lak me. He say he want er git me to reside ovah his table an' make his life a blossomin' pergolory an' be his seamster, too."

"But I thought you said, when I helped you get a divorce after Uncle Davy ran off with that yellow girl, that you never, never would marry again."

"Honey," she said, and there was conviction in her tones, "honey, you ain't been long married yo'se'f. Is you done fo'got how dese here men kin' 'suade an' 'su-u-ade? Dey des 'suades an' 'suades tell a po' weak-minded 'oman ain't got no min' at all."

"AND are you really going to marry him when his wife hasn't been dead a year?"

"Chile, Sis' Abram's deader'n a nit! She's dead ez she'll ever be! 'Tain't no use'n me lettin' dis chance slip by. Too many young niggahs respire to be his wife. Too many yaller girls traypesin' roun' after Brer Abram, chile. De Book, hit say 'a bird in han' 's wuf a hund'red in a cage.' An' hit say to 'strike when de 'i'un's hot. I 'low I better not take no chances on dat pohtable preacher niggah. He might make anuther indecision." Here she proceeded to unwrap a stamped envelope and a large sheet of foolscap paper.

"I fotch dis here envellup an' dis paper fo' you to write me a letter, honey, an' I wants yo' to do you' best. He's a edjicated niggah, chile."

I sat down at the kitchen table to play amanuensis, and she dictated as follows:

"Deah Reve'nd Abram:

"De hours am slow an' weary sense yo' done went away. Your honeyful words been buzzin' in my yeahs. I been 'flectin' on you' pohtable 'pearance, an' yo' condescendin' offer to encumber me wid yo'se'f. It am a sho'ly fine offer. I ain't findin' it in my heart to infuse

"Dat Fool Niggah, He Says It Ain't Good fo' Man to Be Alone."

you; so I seat myse'f, an' takes my pen in hand, to write you dese few lines to let you know I will except yo' offer.

"I'se been amournin' fo' you' presence jes laik a little mou'nin' dove, mournin' fo' hits mate."

After a pause, she added: "Dat's insufficient."

"How shall I close it? Shall I say, 'Yours sincerely,' 'Your sincere friend,' or what?"

Aunt Mandy looked up beseechingly. "Honey," she said, "couldn't you make hit a little mo' lovin'? S'posin' you said, 'Frum you' own true love, Mis' Mandy Carter?'" So the letter was concluded with a grand flourish and sent on its winged way.

The following Monday morning, Aunt Mandy was more smiling than usual, carrying a large bundle, which she proudly unwrapped to display a roll of cashmere of most vivid peacock blue, and some wide butter-colored lace.

"You 'members dat correspondence you writ fo' me? Dis am de upshot o' dat debblemint, honey. Mist' Abram, he done went an' bought dis here paycock blue ca'fsmere and dis cream lace fo' to dar daid almos' fo' a week, an' dey tells me dem doctors jes' been keepin' her alive on dem dare objects—dis nuffin else, Miss Sue. She sho' is lowered herse'f in my 'stemation doin' her ma like dat. But I got ter be moseyin' on. You gwine show me 'bout dat weddin' gown, ain't you, honey?"

Of course, I gladly gave suggestions as to the making of it, and, with my own hands, arranged the mosquito-bar bridal veil. I contributed a wreath of white flowers from an old summer hat, another of her admirers among the "quality white folks" contributed a fan, and she and the Reverend Mr. Abram jointly gave an antenuptial "festible," the proceeds from which went to buy the bride's gloves, and shoes of the loudest shade of tan, and a new celluloid collar and a purple tie for the bridegroom. A number of "white folks" were invited to witness the marriage, which was solemnized in due style in the "Fust Baptist Chu'ch" in Stringtown.

SEATED in one corner, roped off for them by broad streamers of white domestic, the white people awaited im-

She Rested, Seated Herself at the Wheezy Little Organ and Began to Sing: "I Loves You Tru-ly."

pmnify me fo' de weddin'. An' dis here musquiter-bar—I 'low to mak de veil outen hit. I wants you to fix dat, honey; you is a good seamster.

"An' my gal, Pearline, an' his gal, Rubifoam, dey's gwine to be de flower-gals, an' my tother gal, Exsy, she gwine be maid of honoh, an' his boy, Troub, he gwine be des' groomsman."

"Yassum, hit's a awful nice long name. Dat ain't all on it. Her full name is Eczema. We des say Exsy fo' short. All my chilluns got quality names. My baby gal, we calls her Angy for short; but her full name is Angina Pectoris. Dat name come outen a medicine book. Now dat boy, Troub, dat ain't his name neither. Mist' Abram, he says dah boy's name's Agamemnon; but, when he's little, he be so pesterin' bad, allus an' fo'-ever into trouble, dat dey des tuck to callin' him Trouble, till dey des say Troub fo' short. Honey, is yo' heerd 'bout old Mis' Davis?"

"No," I answered. "Why? What about her?"

"Honey, dat po' ole soul been layin' patiently, but decorously, the arrival of the bridal party. Not one of them would have shown by so much as a twitching of the lips their amusement at the crude attempts to mimic "white folks" that were everywhere in evidence. A huge wedding-bell covered with lint cotton was suspended over the altar. The Easter motto, "Christ the Lord is Risen," shone resplendent in green and silver on the wall behind it. "Niggerheads" and field daisies, sunflowers and four-o'clocks, wild ferns and bachelor-buttons, glowed in lavish profusion about the altar.

When the house was filled, there was a stir at the door, which announced the arrival of the bridal party. Woolly heads wagged back and forth as a tall mulatto girl, who carried herself as the queen of Sheba might have done, swooped down the aisle, carrying a large music-roll. She was dressed in white, with flowing pink ribbons and black suede slippers, with a profusion of "set rings" and heavy bracelets and numerous combs set with brilliants. Proudly, she led the way to the altar, when, with many flourishes and adjustings of her skirts and gold-rimmed glasses, she finally seated herself at the wheezy little organ and began to sing: "I loves you tru—ly."

Pearline, than whom no blacker little imp ever trod the earth, and Rubifoam, only a shade less black, came cautiously down the aisle. Pearline wore a pink dress, pink half-hose, and a huge pink bow on her hair, which stood out stiffly over her head. The patent-leather pumps, as well as the pink dress and hose, had belonged formerly to my own little daughter, while Rubifoam was resplendent in a dress of pale yellow crepe de chine, which had once been a party dress for one of Aunt Mandy's "young ladies." The yellow hose and huge yellow butterfly bow were quite as grotesque on her as the pink finery on Pearline, but they were happily oblivious of everything save the important part they were playing at "Ma and Pa's weddin'," and, with astonishing ease and grace, they scattered roses and nasturtiums, sweet peas and phlox, before the bride, who came leaning fondly on the arm of "dat pohtable preacher niggah."

"Miss Exsy" fearfully and wonderfully arrayed in a dress of Nile green with pink sash and lavender sleeve bows, tan slippers and coral beads, a wreath of sunflowers on her hair and a shower bouquet of yellow cannas, brought up the rear, with Troub, awkward and embarrassed, but grinning widely, at her side.

"Millenium Dawn," some one behind me whispered, "the lion and the lamb."

The minister met them at the altar, shook hands with both, whereupon they exchanged positions so that the couple faced the congregation while the minister stood with his back to it.

"We'll now sing 'On Jordan's Stormy Banks I Stand.' Let everybody sing."

"How appropriate!" my husband whispered.

When that song had been sung as only a churchful of negroes could sing it, the minister offered "a word of prayer," which began with creation and rambled on down thru the ages and off into eternity, but which said never a word about the two voyagers about to embark on the barque, matrimony, a frail one enough in which to try to battle Jordan's stormy waters. At its conclusion, he announced: "We'll now sing dat fav'rite ole hymn, 'One mo' mourner done cum, ain't you glad?'"

Only those who have heard negroes sing their own hymns know what melody they can bring from a seemingly meaningless jargon of words. Tho perhaps not the most appropriate for a marriage song, the little church fairly trembled with the volume of it as every member present sang his best and loudest.

At the conclusion of this hymn, in a very solemn and pompous manner, the minister spoke the words that gained for Aunt Mandy her heart's wish, the coveted title of "Mist' Abram's wife."

"An' now, in seclusion," he proceeded, "we'll sing 'Praise God frum which all blessin's flow,' after which we'll all s'lute de bride."

To every one's amazement, after a whisper passed along down the line of the bridal party, Aunt Mandy took her "preacher nigger" by the arm and walked briskly down the aisle, followed by the flower-girls, the maid of honor, and "best groomsman." They scrambled hastily into Aunt Mandy's wagon, and drove rapidly away.

"He Cum an' Tuck Mistah Abram to the Lock-up."

WHEN she came for the laundry the next morning, she was fairly convulsed with laughter.

"Chile," she said, "you hyeerd dat niggah say 'S'lute de bride?' You see dat bride take dat pohtable preacher out dah doah? Honey, I des does love an' adoah dat niggah; but he not gwine s'lute dis bride 'fo' all dem white folks. No, sah! he do his salutin' at home.

"Look a-yonder, honey! See dem clouds? 'Never you see de sky diagrainmin' an' de clouds a havin' convulsions, you can sho' look out fo' some kin' uv weather. An' I got to be moseyin' on, kyase Mist' Abram, he done been tellin' me not to inspose myse'f. 'Fo' I goes, honey, I wants to ax you to order me a dime can o' constipated lye gin I fetches de close home. A cook? No, chile, I don't know whar you'd fine one. Dis yistiddy, dey wuz three white womans out our way astin' if we knowed any colored ladies what wants to cook. You see, honey, we'se all got husban's an' our husban's don' permit us to work. Well, good-by, honey, take keer o' yo'-se'f."

The next Monday morning, Aunt Mandy was not turbaned and smiling, as usual, but bandaged and sullen.

"What's the matter?" I asked. "Have you and Brer Abram been in a fight?"

"You know dat trifiin' yaller gal, Vashti? Dat'n what paints her ugly self an' wears specs? She say she haf to wear 'em kase of her vision of eyesight. She des apein' white folks. Don't need 'em no moah 'n I does! She been a tryin' to tole Mist' Abram 'way frum home. What'd I do? I done a plenty. I beat her to a frazzle an' tuck a broom an' knocked dat pohtable niggah down an' beat him up so good he been feelin' pohly ever since. He been 'havin' hese'f, too, honey. He sho'ly have! Dat trifin' Vashti, she went an' 'ported to de peace

officer 'at we wuz a fightin' an' he cum an' tuck Mist' Abram to the lock-up. But I went down dar an' tole Mist' Jailer 'at'n dat niggah loose, we ain't fighters! He never spoke a cross word to me in all his life.' I tole him dat we wuz dere at home, tendin' to our own business, peaceablelaik 'n' here dey comes, tryin' to infuse us into a 'greement. I sez, sez I, pintedly: 'They wa'n't a thing the matter more'n me an' Mist' Abram's guilty uv a little innocent love. He sho' is a good conditioned man! Ain't you gwine to turn him loose, boss?"

"Honey, dat white man laff so he laik to bust hese'f; but he sho' did turn dat niggah loose. Dat Vashti, she been goin' on too. Honey, don' you never let nobody run over you, none o' dese photographer-womens what works on writin'-machines 'n' nobody! You stan' up fo' yo'se'f, honey—yo' man'll like yo' heap better, chile; I des does love an' adoah dat niggah."

The "honk honk" of an auto sounded up the street. Aunt Mandy picked up her ears.

"Ain't dat one of them fool auto-mobilly machines?"

I nodded affirmatively.

"Dey sho' is crazy fool-things. Des now, I wuz comin' 'long peaceable, holdin' my umbrel kyase 'twuz rainin', an' a white man had to holler at me: 'Put down your parasol, Aunty; you'll make it jump de track,' an' dere I had to stan' in de rain tell it passed. Wouldn't have one of de crazy things. Nothin' but a kerosene can, lit on both ends, nohow. Look at dat niggah—drivin' off widout insultin' me 'bout it! I'll bust his haid. I loves an' adoahs him, but he sho' got to mind," and away she went to "speak her mind" to Brer Abram.

The Dark Mirror

By Louis Joseph Vance

The Story of the Story

LEONORA was a girl of the underworld. Some of her associates were Harry the Nut, Leo Bielinsky or Leo the Blood, Inez, English Addie, Charlie the Coke, and her lover,

RED CARNAHAN, the gunman. That is to say—Red loved Leonora, but Leonora had promised

MARIO, a well-educated and well-to-do Spaniard studying down in the Bohemian section of the city, that she would marry him and run away from the gang and Red. For, indeed, it was Mario that she loved.

Then came the night of the pistol battle when Ennis and Corbin, two plainclothesmen pursuing Leo the Blood into the gang's headquarters, were killed by Red's automatic, adding two murders to that just perpetrated by Leo. And amid the excitement, Red got Leonora down the fire escape into the darkness where she lost consciousness.

But all this the dream! All this the fantasy! All this but one of the wild nightmarish imaginings which for life had entered the dreams of, and had troubled and frightened

PRISCILLA MAINE, wealthy and single girl, living in Fifth avenue, New York, with her aunt,

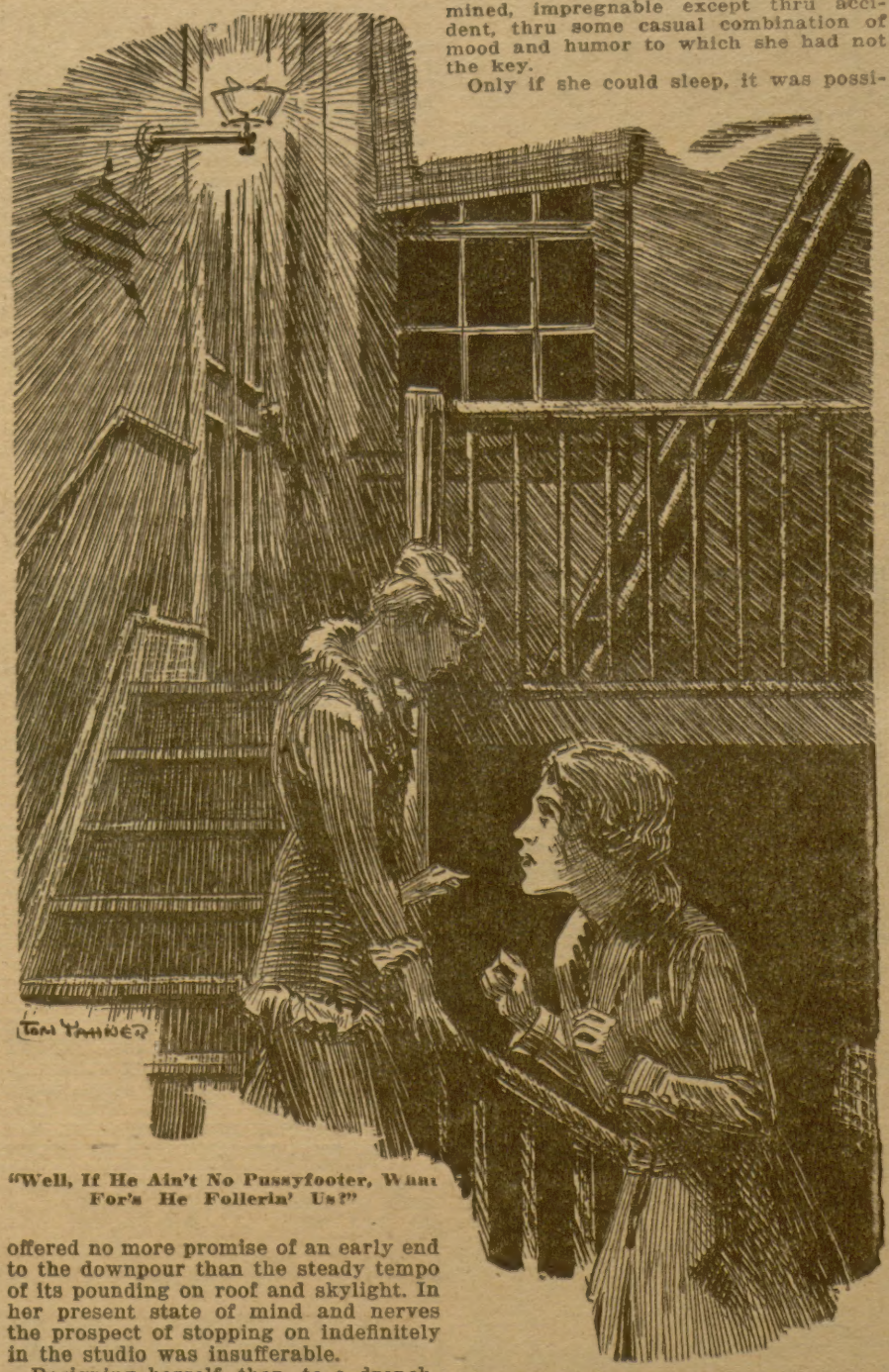
MRS. TROWBRIDGE. This was why she at last took her problem to

DR. PHILLIP FOSDICK, who had known her almost from babyhood. Fosdick was a specialist in psychical and mental diseases, and derangements of the nervous system. He heard her thru. He wrote every detail of her last night's dream down on paper. Then, with grave face, he showed her a newspaper in which every occurrence of her dream was found to have taken place in a pistol battle in the underworld the night before.

Fosdick, however, resolved to uncover this mystery—the mystery of a girl who in her dreams was some one else, mingling with underworld characters who actually existed. The reason, of course, was that he loved her. Searching back in her life, he found nothing illuminating. Her father,

HENRY HOBART MAINE, had been an artist. Her mother had died—at least no one knew anything of her. Then Fosdick uncovered a something. He found that a picture Priscilla had painted of herself in her studio, dressed in gypsy costume, was hypnotizing the girl. Then came to her another horrible dream. She found herself, as Leonora, living in a cheap room. Came Charlie the Coke to tell her to go to where Red was hiding without delay. She awoke from it, terrified, and she knew she must somehow follow out the adventures of this kindred soul, Leonora, which had been cut short by her awakening.

This story began in No. 37 the Ledger for Sept. 11. Back copies may be obtained from our agents or newsdealers.



"Well, If He Ain't No Pussyfooter, What For's He Follerin' Us?"

CHAPTER XVIII.
RENDEZVOUS WITH DEATH.

IN NEW YORK even hope and despair may meet at times on common ground; for if it shower, only the most desperate of optimists will try to get a taxicab by telephone. By the time Priscilla Maine had spenty twenty minutes and all her patience garnering snubs from one arrogant cab company after another, the van of the storm has passed, dragging its heaviest guns on rumbling caissons, leaving the completer subjugation of the stunned and cringing city to the endless legions of the rain.

Her own car was being used by Mrs. Trowbridge for a dinner visit out of town. The outlook from the windows offered no more promise of an early end to the downpour than the steady tempo of its pounding on roof and skylight. In her present state of mind and nerves the prospect of stopping on indefinitely in the studio was insufferable.

Resigning herself, then, to a drenching, the girl locked up and scampered thru swimming streets to Fifth avenue—where she waited three minutes that seemed ten till a trudging bus consented to pick her up. At the uptown end of her journey, likewise, she had two blocks to run, from Fifth avenue to Park, before she got home with hat, suit, furs and temper all demoralized.

While her maid prepared a bath, she begged off by telephone from a dinner engagement to which she had long been looking forward. Tonight she felt it would be impossible to hold her own, with anxiety on account of Mario and Leonora forever at her elbow, a gibbering specter.

A hot bath and the ease of neglige should have lent her some tranquility, but did not. She made the merest pretense of dining from a tray in her room. She could not forget. . . .

Past 7—in less than three hours Leonora must start upon her journey. . . .

And she could do nothing . . . nothing! . . . but wait and wonder and wring useless hands . . .

The evening aged with desolating deliberation, the tension of anxiety became maddening, the need to know a consuming prepossession. By 9 Priscilla was beside herself, pacing madly to and fro, the creature of exquisite torments, hagridden by premonitions so awful she dared not name them even to herself.

A little before 10 an inexplicable change in the texture of her emotions made her aware that the peak of her transports had been reached and passed. Of a sudden she found herself more calm, not with the calm of misgivings set at rest, rather with that of courage dauntlessly addressing itself to a forlorn hope.

Intuition divined the explanation: In that strange, deep sympathy which made them one, her mental and emotional processes faithfully reflected Leonora's; what agonies of doubts and fears she had suffered tonight were but replicas of those which Leonora had suffered. But now the time of waiting was no more: Leonora had left her hiding place and, committing herself bravely to her dark adventure, had found relief in action.

If only she might be with Leanora tonight as she had so often been, seeing what she saw, doing what she did, knowing what she knew, participating in every reaction of her wits and perceptions . . .

But the barrier of Priscilla's waking consciousness stood out between them like a wall unscalable, not to be undermined, impregnable except thru accident, thru some casual combination of mood and humor to which she had not the key.

Only if she could sleep, it was possible, she might dream . . .

Darkening her bedchamber, she went to the window, opened it, and tarried a little in its recess, looking out.

Rain was still falling, torrential, lancing the night with its myriad slender, silver, slanting jets, brimming gutters, flooding sidewalks, blackening and burnishing roadways to the semblance of rivers of ink that mirrored a multitude of lights. The air, not cold, but saturate, carried a pungent smell of cleanliness. Motor cars went sedately, ripping their tires crisply from the wet. Under ebony umbrellas, foot-farers forged blindly into the wind or scudded briskly before it. The mutter of traffic was muted to inconsequence by the unbroken crepitation of falling water.

She thought of Leonora struggling thru that scouring tempest to an unknown destination . . .

The clock struck 10.

She turned back to her bed, threw herself down upon it without undressing, and closed her eyes. Immediately she opened them again: There could be no sleep for her till mind and spirit were fagged out altogether.

She lay unmoving, wide eyes staring blindly into the tempered darkness.

On her dressing table the convex crystal of a French clock caught a clear beam from some street light and was transfigured into the likeness of a little captive moon of dead white glare. Upon this, the brightest spot in the room, Priscilla's gaze focused naturally. For minutes on end she watched it, in a phase of lethargic fascination which was rewarded when the little moon began to grow, to spread out, its cold light filling the room, the world, and all the spaces of her consciousness, so that spellbound perceptions grew faint, then failed, and she was no more aware of herself as Priscilla Maine, an individual thing, but only as a pinpoint of nameless being adrift in infinity.

CHAPTER XIX.
THE STREET.

SHE had neither raincoat nor umbrella; demoniac squalls hailed such defenseless prey, and gusts of pelting drops stung the bare flesh of her face like birdshot. Long before she managed to weather the corner and found herself in the street, her thin cloak was soaked thru and so was all beneath it, her shoes were squelching, her sodden skirts, harried by the wind, were clinging tenaciously to her legs, making progress incredibly difficult. Yet she did not mind, but found a kind of savage delight in battling with the elements, gaining ground against their malicious will. Following long confinement to that room of unspeakable boredom there was compensation and to spare in this false sense of freedom, in the mere fact that she was at last at large, enough to render her indifferent to damaged clothing as well as to the clammy discomfort with which it plastered her chilled body. She leaned her slim young body against the wind and gladly fought it for every breath and step, she relished keenly the wet sweetness of the air, the gurgle of rushing gutters, the lilliputian drumfire of the rain, the motley cheer of weeping windows. But for these last one might padonably have taken the street for part of some drowned city peopled by gray ghostly shapes, figures glimpsed darkly thru sweeping waves of rain as they scurried from curb to curb, lumbered down the wind or, like Leonora, plodded doggedly against its howling opposition. But few such were visible at any time; humanity braved the elements that night solely under the lash of elemental appetites, such as the necessity of beer, and then made its excursions as brief as might be. Even the police hugged shelter. . . .

A night of terror, she thought, with a shiver as much of dread as of cold, pausing in the lee of a corner to regain her breath before renewing contest with the storm; a night when anything might happen. . . .

Resolutely she put that thought behind her; she did not dare to be afraid. And lest she be tempted again to think and falter, she spurred herself pitilessly on once more.

At length she turned aside into a sullen street, ill lighted, wholly desolate in all its visible lengths save for the shining welcome of saloon windows on the ground floor of a dilapidated dwelling in the middle of the street; beacons marking the end of the first stage of her journey.

CHAPTER XX.
THE HOP-JOINT.

THE saloon, a boozing den of the lowest order, occupied quarters first intended for a shop. Empty shop windows, flanking a double doorway, were backed by screens of machine-carved wood stained to mock mahogany and hung with beer lithographs. To one side, under a sign—gilt lettering on a black ground: "Family Entrance"—a single door stood open on a short hallway which led to a dreary room behind the bar, where local sots of both sexes sat in sodden congress over tables sticky with dregs, their feet scuffling in coarse, damp sawdust. To the right of this door a window with a ledge broke the sidewall, communicating with the bar for the convenience of neighboring ladies and other fastidious souls who, rather than risk social contamination by entering a common barroom, fetched empty pails of tin and carried them away filled with nourishment for home consumption. To the left a constricted staircase ascended to regions of uninviting darkness. Leonora, however, mounted with confidence and, finding a blank shut door at the top, planted a confident finger on a push-button which she could not possibly have located by sight.

A venomous buzz responded. Shuffling feet drew near the door, in which a grille opened, letting out a shaft of strong light which fell squarely on the girl's face.

She said coolly: "'Lo, John. Let me in."

The head framed in the square of the grille uttered a noise, inarticulate, something between a grunt and a growl. A chain bolt rattled. The door swung inward. Leonora entered, paused, faced the guardian of the portal—a Chinese, aged, shrivelled of face, shrunken of body, impassive—whom she addressed with the brusque insouciance of old acquaintance.

"Charlie anywheres about?"

With racial economy of gesture the Chinese jerked a thumb toward the rear

of the house, and turned to refasten the door. Leonora moved down the hall, disdainfully sniffing tainted air, and entered a large room whose atmosphere was mephitic with the unforgettable, sickly sweet fumes of opium. Here, in half-curtained bunks or on thin mattresses upon the floor, in a forbidding half light furnished by a single closely shaded lamp, perhaps a dozen men and women lay in uncouth postures, deep in drugged stupors. One only was in complete possession of his wits: the man John, of whom Leonora had seen nothing since that fateful night at Ristori's.

Inez alone recognized in any way this addition to the company, looking up with a sullen face from her seat on the edge of a mattress on which lay, with limbs asprawl and face of ghastly pallor upturned to the dim light, his mouth half open, his eyes half closed, the thick stem of an opium pipe dangling from limp fingers, the man whom Leonora had come to meet.

In a seizure of dismay so overpowering as to blind her completely to the sneer of gratification which Inez sought in vain to dissemble, Leonora dropped to her knees beside the man and shook his shoulders with frantic hands.

"Charlie!" she cried in a voice urgent with fright and entreaty, "wake up. Charlie! For God's sake, wake up!"

The man's head rolled from side to side with horrifying limpness, his lips moved tremulously without closing, otherwise he made no sign. So complete was the eclipse of sensibility in him that nothing survived but the automatic functioning of his physical system. He might have been lifeless, he had better been dead.

Not one person in the room so much as turned a head when the cries of the frantic girl disturbed the quiet, not even Inez; for tho she had mastered her betraying smile, that one had no need to stir in order to watch Leonora. Evil exultation continued to inform her cold eyes as long as they were unobserved; but Leonora found them quick with specious sympathy when, at length appreciating the futility of her efforts, she loosed her hold on Charlie's shoulders and sank on her heels.

"My God!" she said, with a stricken face, "what'm I going to do?"

"What's the trouble, dearie?" Inez spoke with cloying sweetness, but the other was too far gone in despair to notice, or to care if she had noticed. "Anything I can do to help?"

"I don' know"—Leonora shook her head slowly—"guess not."

"Whyn't you tell me and find out?" Inez leaned across the body of the drug victim and placed a coarse red hand affectionately over Leonora's. "You can trust me, I guess. We're all in this mess together, ain't we?"

"It's only Red," Leonora responded dully. "He said for me to come to him tonight. He sent word by Charlie—said I'd got to come tonight. Charlie promised he'd meet me here and show me the way. He wouldn't tell me—said Red made him swear not to. I don't see why . . . But I wish to God Charlie'd kept his word to me like he did to Red."

"What do you mean?"

"I was afraid of this." She nodded at the unconscious man. "Charlie promised me he wouldn't smoke more'n two pipes."

Inez laughed shrilly. "Guess he must've had six," she declared. "I rolled three pills for him since I came in."

"And now he's down and out," Leonora pursued, "and I don't know how to find Red, and he won't take any excuses . . . Inez, I'm scared!"

"You poor kid!" Inez tightened her clasp on Leonora's hand. "But you don't have to worry. I'll take you to Red."

"You?" Leonora cried, staring. "How d'you know?"

"Oh, I've been there half a dozen times at least."

The smile of conscious triumph, which Inez could not suppress, was unspeakably offensive, and brought back vividly to mind the rivalry which had always existed between them and which had flared up into open hostility at their lost recontre. Hot resentment kindled in Leonora's eyes, hot color flushed her cheeks; but she dug teeth into her underlip and grimly fought down the impulse to give her anger tongue. Not only was that precisely what Inez wanted, but it might prove fatal. There was more than pride at stake, there was the life of him who loved her and whom she loved. Nothing, indeed, but that love of hers for Mario had broken down her will to refuse Red's summons; only the threat of Red's vengeance wreaked on Mario had made her supple to the gangster's will. And now, if she quarreled with Inez, that one would never show her the way to Red. Anything (she repeated, in her secret thoughts) might happen . . .

"Leo told you," she muttered.

"Sure he did," Inez agreed cheerfully. "You don't suppose Leo's leary of me like Red is of you, Nora dear? Why, I've known all along where they two was layin' up."

Long lashes drooped to veil Leonora's smouldering eyes. Inez's malicious smile flashed and faded. The other clinched her hands into tight fists, then opened them. She looked up, pride conquered and trampled under foot by love.

"Inez," she pleaded simply: "I got to see Red tonight or . . . I don't know what'll happen. Please take me to him, Inez!"

The woman delayed her response for a moment, that she might relish the full flavor of her triumph. Then, jumping up, she said:

"Sure I will, dearie. C'mon; le's go."

CHAPTER XXI.
THE ROOFS.

AGAIN the night, the wind, the rain, the laborious transit of dim, weltering streets. . . .

Elbow to elbow, heads bowed, the two women trudged in tight-lipped silence, for the gale was greedy of their breath, and save in screams they could not make themselves heard above its clamor. Avoiding main traveled streets, Inez led thru a tortuous maze of murky backways, till they came to a sinister block of towering, teeming tenements, into which, plucking Leonora by the sleeve, she turned.

In the unsavory lower hall Leonora spoke incredulously: "Not here?"

Inez gave a negative gesture: "I should say not. Acrost the roofs. . . . You don't suppose I'm such a simp as to lead a dick to the right door, do you?"

"You don't think we're followed?" Leonora demanded in quick alarm.

Inez nodded emphatically. "I know we was."

"Who was it?" Could you see?"

"Nobody I ever seen before; a new bird, I guess, from some uptown precinct. Coarse worker, too; he must've spotted you first, 'cause he was waitin' when we came out, and trailed us all the way."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"What's the use? You know now, don't you? It wouldn't 've done you any good to know in the street, as long's I knew and had sense enough to lead him wrong, like this. . . . C'mon."

They began to run up long flights of stairs lighted only by single gas jets low-turned on every other landing, and noisome with stratified stenches of evil cookery and things worse yet; the predominating race tenanting each successive floor indicated by its dominant effluvium, were it garlic, boiled cabbage, fried fish, or the subtle, penetrating, undisguisable odor of opium smoke. Gusts of voices lifted in rude laughter or more commonly quarrelsome issued from doorways that stood as a rule wide. Once there was a sound of weeping, too, sickening dull wails of some woman cruelly used. And always the inevitable squalling of children fretful in unhappiness. . . . On the top landing Inez paused to peer over the rail. "That's him," she panted, nodding.

Leonora joined her. At the bottom of the gloomy, deep well of the staircase the foreshortened figure of a man was visible, his upturned face a mere blur of flesh color. But something individual in the pose caught Leonora's eye and prodded what she took for some memory half erased.

"That's no dick," she declared impulsively.

"How d'you know?"

"I don't know, but somehow I do. Seems like I must've seen him somewheres before."

"Well, if he ain't no pussyfooter, what for's he followin' us?"

"I don't know," Leonora repeated vaguely. "Maybe I'm wrong . . ."

She was not, as the Self knew that journeyed with her, tho she did not suspect its company. . . .

An iron ladder rose to a trap door thru which they crawled out upon the roof.

HERE the blackness was oppressive, relieved only by a dull reflection of the city's glow on the low hung canopy of cloud; and the tempest had unhindered sweep. Time and again vicious blasts all but carried the two women off their feet, Rain driving in vast sheets half blinded them and rendered their passage of the roofs doubly perilous. They slipped, stumbled, blundered, bruised their bodies against unseen obstacles, their shins upon low copings dividing house from house (for the roofs were fortunately all on a level), and more than once by the narrowest of margins escaped pitching headlong to death at the bottom of some dark airshaft.

Leonora had lost all sense of reckoning and was beginning to wonder how Inez could hold on so confidently when this last stopped, knelt, and began to tug at the heavy latch of another trap door. Leonora assisting, between them they threw it back, into a hallway indistinguishably unlike that which they had just left. But Inez seemed to recognize it instantly.

"It's all right," she whispered harshly, pausing halfway down the ladder when Leonora stood on the landing below. "The door on the left, at the back. You know the high sign. I'll be shutting this trap. Look sharp—before somebody lamps us!"

She climbed back a couple of rungs to wrestle with the hatch, while Leonora, turning to the door designated, saluted its panels with the peculiar rap which alone would be acknowledged by Red.

For some time she waited, hearing no sounds from the far side of the door, hearing indeed nothing other than the bluster of the storm and Inez petulantly anathematizing the clumsy and obstinate hatch. Presently the thing fell into place with a crash, and the girl turned, looking to see Inez drop to the landing and surprised that she did not, but with a surprise no sooner conceived than smothered in a greater. For the door swung open suddenly, and a voice she knew, for whose accents she had hungered ceaselessly for days on end—neither Red's voice nor Leo's—cried in amazement:

"Leonora!"

And looking up into the face of the man Mario, the girl uttered a broken cry of wonder and gladness. She did not understand how this thing had come about, that she should find here the man she loved where she thought to find that other whom she feared with fear so profound that it was twin with hatred. But it didn't matter; in the stunning joy of that surprise, nothing seemed to matter except that chance had led her at last to Mario, in spite of all her struggles to keep away from him, to deny love and self lest she entangle him as well in the toils of her misfortunes.

She went as naturally to his arms as a child in trouble to the arms of its father: Inez, Red, Leo, the police—everything—forgotten in the happiness of that meeting.

Gently drawing her across the threshold, Mario shut the door between them and the world.

CHAPTER XXII.
THE HAVEN.

"SO YOU have come to me . . . at last!"

She lifted her rain-sweet face from the warm haven of his shoulder, blindly yearning toward his lips . . . and remembered. Fear lanced that ecstasy like pain. With a convulsive movement she wrenched away her lips and struggled from his arms.

"Leonora!" he protested, "what is it?"

"Red!" she gasped, staring wildly round. "Leo—where are they?"

"How should I know? What are those two to me—to us?"

"Where are we?"

"In my rooms, as you see . . . well beyond the reach of those cutthroats!"

"But"—a dubious hand faltered to her cheek—"I came here to meet Red. He sent for me. Inez brought me."

"Then Inez led you amiss, dear—no: aright!" His arms again enfolded her. "And thank God for that!"

Confused, she fell into a silence, misgivings benumbed by wonder. Impossible to couple the thought of Red, or any similar association, with quarters of such strange quality, all but impossible to credit the fact of their existence in that shabby tenement of sorry fortunes or, indeed, anywhere within the boundaries of a neighborhood so mean. Incredulity yielded only to recognition of the plan of the rooms, something reduplicated four times on every floor of every building on the block. But here taste and means had transfigured the commonplace into an abode of such luxury as the girl had seldom dreamed of—indeed, had never seen but in the pages of illustrated magazines.

In this main room, dark hangings disguised the walls, with framed paintings like glowing windows open on exotic landscapes, and shelves heavy laden with volumes in rich bindings. An antique Chinese rug of exquisite artistry hid in part a polished dark floor of parquetry. Upon a library table of old Spanish oak books, manuscripts and objects d'art were lustrous in the warm light of a lamp of wrought brass. Wide-armed chairs of deep upholstery in leather offered caressing invitation to weary limbs. An atmosphere of studious repose soothed excited sensibilities.

A bedchamber partly visible thru one open door offered a strong contrast of almost Spartan simplicity with soberly

(Continued on Page 21.)

Baby touched the hot stove

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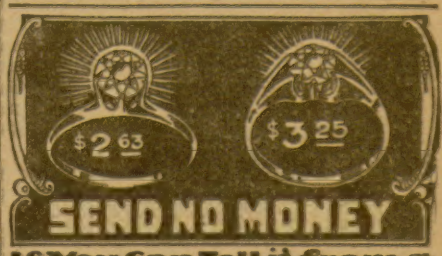

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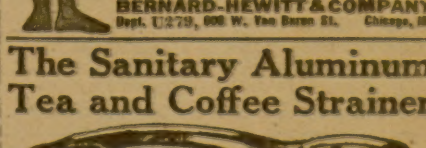

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PODNER

By EDWIN BLISS

The Stars Were Guttering Out When We Packed Hell Diver and Started, the Morning Air Searching Out the Marrow in Our Bones, and the Sun Painting the Snow-filled Canyons That Top Cameron's Cone in a Cross of Blazing Fire.

I SAW him first,—the poet man. He wasn't much to look at, just a messy, long-haired little fellow who got took quick in the wind and with eyes that hated anybody who felt sorry for him. Funny I noticed him at all. We see them every day out here, dragging themselves off the cars and hiking for the mountains. Almost every day, long pine boxes are shoved in the baggage car billing them back home. They come and go. Just lungers—that's all.

Guess his nerve was what stopped my pay car. He walked down the platform, straight and stiff till the cough hit him, racking his body terrible, but his eyes blazing warning at me not to notice it.

"Mountain air kind of bite your gizzard?" I asks careless like.

He whirled on me, mouth and eyes trying to cuss me, then keeled over in my arms, dead weight. Two days he fussed around the borders and barrancas of the Black Country before he comes to himself in my shack, his big eyes soft and shiny and wondering at the things he'd just seen. I bent over him and he recognized me immediate, fighting for his breath.

" 'Tain't my gizzard," he gasps; "it's my lung, you idiot, and what the hell business is it of yours?"

And that's how I met up with Podner, P-a-r-d-n-e-r, Podner. He was my podner and Podner I called him always, it fitting better to my tongue than his fancy handle. Game as a pebble, Podner was. Never complained, but bunked in my shack like it was comfortable as home back East and I was refined and educated. It takes some nerve to do that in a strange country when you haven't a nickel, haven't anything but a hole in your lung.

He would sit for hours before the door, writing kit handy, his eyes fastened on the timber line of St. Peter's Dome, where the creek twists round on itself and dances down the canyon just as tho it hadn't ever figured on reaching the top. Day's I'd leave him sitting there, the sad look on his face, nights I'd come back to find him still there, hungering for something he couldn't seem to quite locate. And the moon, whi e-washing the door, seemed to leave a lot of itself in Podner's eyes, tender, pleading, and easy to hurt. I'd never let on to notice, just get out the skillet and doctor up a mess of bacon and beans and then we'd eat, him silent and forgetful that I was there at all. I knew his mind was on that pad of paper; the pad that never showed a line of writing.

"The disease is mostly in his head," Doc used to say to me. "He is highly imaginative, Pete, all poet fellows are. Just distract his mind and you'll be astonished at the rapidity of his improvement."

But Podner was tender as a woman and I was just an old alkali and mountain man who knew nothing much that got away from "color." I talked it over with Hell Diver heaps of times. Me and Hell Diver got that habit twenty years back when my wife—well, anyhow, burros have lots more sense than folks about such things, and finally I got an idea. I sprung it on him next time I heard him pacing up and down, down and up the floor, stopping at the window to stare out at the moon.

"Podner," says I, nervous for fear of getting him touchy. "I'm a tough old jasper without much feelings but I know one thing for certain sure, when a man spends his time looking at the moon, his ears is hankering for the rustle of one certain petticoat. I know, because I've stared myself. I married a dance-hall girl in Cripple's old days and gave her the Gophir Mine, after which she ups and runs off with Joe Ellwood. When Joe didn't come back I packed Hell Diver and started looking for him and another mine. Women is hard to get off the head. Podner, but a pipe and the sight of rich quartz will do it. In the morning, me and you start prospecting."

His eyes grew big with terror as he looked at me, then moved to the table, planting his hands on the writing pad and pencils lying there, protecting them as a jealous mother would her baby.

"My poetry, Pete!" he cried. "I'm too weak to do that and write. You don't, can't understand, Pete," he went on, softening his voice and resting his puny white hands on my shoulders in a way that always set me shivering inside. "I came out here to die, here in the mountain. I might just as well have died in New York if some big purpose hadn't been behind it all. I've felt the poem stirring within me in this big country, this country that frightens yet caresses me. I only want an hour Pete; my hour, when I can write all that I'm feeling. Only my hour Pete, and something tells me I'll get it."

I gentled him into seeing. I'd never meant he should leave the poetry outfit behind, tho I had meant just that; told him of real mountains beside which these were only foothills, mountains where a man could get a lungful of air without his chest hitting a crowd; got him excited and eager to be off, him being just a child in a strange country.

THE stars were guttering out when we packed Hell Diver and started, the morning air searching out the marrow in our bones, and the sun painting the snow-filled canyons that top Cameron's Cone in a cross of blazing fire. Thru the mountains which the miners had gophered out, down into valleys and up again, we traveled that day, with Podner chattering his delight and Hell Diver looking at him astonished, like an old-timer would, and me just happy.

The third day out he began to grow silent, and his imagination-drawn mines were turning out to be mica as his head sagged forward and his feet lagged and dragged. But I kept him walking, heading for Red Mesa, knowing it would astonish him plumb out of himself; besides, Red Mesa had never been half prospected.

We came on it the sixth day, just as me and Hell Diver had come on it a dozen times before, abruptly as you round the Devil's Slide. Podner was staggering, fighting for his feet, head leaning forward, and legs wobbly. He got one eyeful, then straightened, the breath coming thru his teeth and into his lungs with a big, hissing sound. I knew his feelings, never having quite got over them myself when I stumble on Red Mesa.

A wilderness, a desert of rocks; a wilderness, a desert of mountains of rocks—that's Red Mesa. But it's not all red. There's no color or mix-up of colors that Red Mesa hasn't got. It's not made, Red Mesa ain't. It's just tumbled together in ledges, canyons, mountains, rough valleys; chucked out of heaven because it hurt the angels' eyes. When tne Lord painted this earth he must a worn Red Mesa for his clothes and, being so soiled when he finished, tossed them down here where only sun-squinted, old jaspers like me would tumble across 'em. Podner was whispering out loud, but whispering:

"It's the palette of God, Pete! The palette of God! I mustn't leave; mustn't go another step! I can write here, can see, and feel! And every color out there must be in my poem, every——"

He stopped, grabbing my arm till his weak fingers bit right to the bone. He wasn't whispering any more, the huskiness had disappeared from his voice, his eyes were clear but looking far away. He waved one hand toward Red Mesa while his voice rolled out like chiming gold.

"You see rocks out there, Pete; rocks and their colors. But I see more than rocks, more than colors—much more. I see my hour out there; the hour I've fought and prayed for. And, as I see my hour, just as plainly do I see all that mass of rock shape itself into buildings that pierce the sky, hiving with thousands and hundreds of thousands of human beings just like us. And the irregular rock canyons before me become streets, all crowded, Pete, with people. And there is one street where the hurrying crowd of human beings stop and stare into the great window of a great store—a book shop, Pete. They talk with one another altho they are not acquainted, talk about the book, the volume staring out of that window at them.

And there is a woman, Pete, who stops too. I do not know her, have never seen her, but some day I shall know her, shall see her. She does not talk. She looks at the book, Pete, and she has tear-mists in her eyes, and she does not know it nor would she care if she did, for she has read the book. It is the woman I have never seen save in the moon, Pete; and the book is the poem that shall be born of my hour, and it shall bring us together. That's what I see out there—New York, Pete. The city of power, they call it; the city of riches, they say it is. And as I look on the power of Red Mesa I feel I can put it in my poem, and it shall be so much more powerful than the man-made city; I see The Woman out there and the rich possession of her love will be so much richer than all the dross of the town. Oh, it's a wonderful country, Pete!"

"That's right," I agreed. "And it ain't been half mineralized."

He looked at me quick, as tho hurt, then a curious, foxy expression crossed his face. That night he babbled like a trout stream, fancying mines so rich that old King Solomon must have tried to bust his grave to get out and see them; chattering of his useless existence and my splendid one; ripping Nature's innerds, her buried treasure from her rock-ribbed heart—or something like that. And I just smoked my pipe, pretending I didn't know he was pleading with me to stay. Smart little fellow, Podner was.

Finally he rolled up in his blankets and kept still, staring at Red Mesa as the night got its sponge and wiped off all the colors there. The clouds were rocking the moon about and the stars burning big holes in the blanket thrown over them when Podner went to sleep, with never a sign of a cough or hitch.

Funny how you get to know the stars. There's one big fellow that burns like a long-wicked candle and sometimes he stares at me till my pipe burns out and I can't see anything else but him. Old alkalis and mountain men get the habit of talking things over with the Lord when they're up pretty high, where He can hear 'em plain. Somehow, looking from Podner, sleeping with a look of Heaven on his woman's face, and at that unwinking star; listening to the tinkle of Hell Diver's bells as he roamed about with a bad dream, I got a hankering to talk things over.

"LORD," said I quiet, so as not to wake the little fellow, "me and you've made considerable medicine about Joe Ellwood—him as run away with my wife in Cripple Creek. I've sorta changed my mind about wanting you to send him in range. You've heard this podner of mine begging for this hour. I don't want to ask too much, but just hand him that hour, Lord, and I won't ask for nothing else and will take off my hat to you forevermore. Amen."

Maybe it was just because thinking of Joe Ellwood riled me, but I never before had slept good after talking with Him. That night I think I snoozed till morning. Even thinking about Podner made me peaceful and quiet. The little fellow was up ahead of me and when I looked around, after doctoring the breakfast, there he was, sitting on a ledge, poetry outfit in his hands, staring out into Red Mesa, hungry like. He couldn't even eat for feasting his eyes on the rocks and their colors. And he wasn't coughing a mite, breathing as tho the lung hole was plastered over. So I digs out my prospecting kit and hikes back in the hills looking for color, while Podner tries to catch 'em all at once.

Funny how Nature fools with an old jasper same as if he was a tenderfoot. I had been prospecting about six days, never thinking "color" was in the country, but just chuckling to see how fast Podner was getting cured while I made a bluff at working so as to humor him, when rich quartz, a big vein of it, just naturally crops up and hits me in the eye. Right on the surface it was, broad enough to make me think I had another Gophir. Just an accident, but that's always the way it runs. Jim Thatcher chucked away his pick, plumb disgusted, and it turned up the quartz that became Lost Mite Mine. Hell Diver stumbled and uncovered the vein that is the Gophir. It runs that way.

Six days we'd been there, and I'd worked three miles back from Red Mesa. Knowing how tickled Podner would be, him getting more cheerful as his lung healed, I ran that three miles in nothing flat. I found him sitting as I had left him, same position as he'd been in for six days, biting his pencil and staring at Red Mesa to catch it all at once. There was something pitiful about his hunched-over back, something that made me feel less happy about the quartz. I didn't tell him till we'd eaten and had a fire blazing to keep the night wind out of our bones; then I hauled out my specimens, careless like, and watched him as he picked them up. His long, thin fingers just seemed to kiss the streaks

"I Did Speak to a Runty, Long-haired Lunatic Dancing Like a Tarantula, Down to Red Mesa. I spoke to Him, but He Didn't See Me. Plumb Loco He Was."

of dirty gold in them, his eyes darkening.

"Gold, Pete?" he asked softly. "You have found it?"

"Gold, Podner," I answered, knocking out my pipe on the heel of my boot, ashamed to meet his eyes for some reason. "Pretty surface cropping as ever I saw—it's another Gophir."

"And this," he whispered softly to himself, not knowing I could hear, "is gold—gold." He stroked the specimens lightly, that shiny glad look in his eyes as they met mine across the fire. He rose, came over and sat down beside me, leaning his bent elbow on my shoulder. "Pete," he began, "this morning you said the grub was low, that we would have to be on our way. How far is this gold from here—from Red Mesa?"

"A matter of three miles," I answered, uneasy for the curious expression on his face. "We'll make the trip to Ozone in no time—eight days at the most."

"Eight days," he murmured, still looking at me queer. "Pete, I've learned a great deal of this country from listening to you talk. Eight days is a long time to leave a mine alone. Yesterday you said a day was a long time to keep the smell of gold from a prospector's nose. Claim jumpers could do many thing in eight days."

I tried to laugh, but a man can't laugh much at what he's said for gospel and what he knows is gospel. Then I decided to keep quiet, taking it out on Hell Diver. For Podner had the idea that my mine would be in danger and, knowing his unselfish ways, I was nervous for what he'd decide to do. He woke me while the air was cold, the stars still blazing high. His eyes were big and tender as he looked at me and the circles beneath 'em showed he hadn't even turned in.

"I've found the way out, Pete," he said quietly; "sitting here, it came on me what should be done. You've been awfully good to me, humored me and cared for me like I was your son. I know now that the purpose of our meeting, my coming to this country, wasn't to give me my hour, my poem, but to help you to the riches you have earned. It's a far bigger purpose, Pete; and I am thankful, being so weak and you so big and strong, to be used for it. And now you are going to Ozone alone to get the things we need, and I will guard your mine while you are gone. That will be my hour, Pete; so much more worthy an hour than the one I thought had been laid out for me."

You can't argue with women or men like Podner. His imagination was hitched to the idea of guarding my location and anything that appealed to his imagination plumb tickled him. I finally took him to the vein, gave him my old Colts .45 on a .38 carriage, and left him there—proudest little fighting cock that ever hit the mountains; feeling he was sacrificing himself and his poem to a generous idea. That was Podner all the time.

Foolish? Of course it was. But somehow, the memory of him standing guard for me, his soul crying out for the poem and his heart giving it up for me—well, it made my legs eat up the miles between me and Ozone, made Hell Diver sore as the itch. Just three days took me to town, got me outfitted, and ready for the return trip.

And all the way back I was chuckling for joy at thinking of Podner's sacrifice. Doc used to tell me he was a selfish little prig and I an old fool, and I was happy to think of what Doc would say when I told him of this. It was near the end of the sixth afternoon that I sighted landmarks and knew I was close. Thinks I to myself, maybe Podner will salt me with lead if I come on him unexpected. So I takes off Hell Diver's bells and tethers him while I slips up on my location, quiet and soft and easy. And, times, I'd have to stop and get my breath from laughing at the picture I could almost see, of Podner guarding the place with that businesslike Colts, fierce and savage as tho he'd been paped on blood instead of milk.

Then a bullet whined over my head, singing a most uncomfortable tune. I laughed still, as I rose, seeing the surprise on Podner's face, but the laugh wandered off somewhere else as I found my eyes staring into the black hole of a Winchester and, behind that hole, into the toughest, black bearded pirate's features I'd ever seen.

"You're wandering on my location, stranger," he growled. "Vamoose—molly pronto!"

"Your location like hell!" I came back quick, cussing myself as I recollected leaving my new gun back with Hell Diver, riled at knowing my own helplessness.

"Vamoose," he repeated, rocking the gun in my direction. "I've got this location staked neat and businesslike. Just wander on till I see what your back looks like."

LITTLE ants' nests of nerves began tickling the back of my neck while the icy fingers played along my spine, for a thought—a horrible thought—hit me between the eyes as I looked on his ugly face. What had this pirate done with Podner—the little fellow—Podner, whom I'd left in charge? For a second I was ready to spring at him, to choke the truth out of him, and the Winchester grew steady as a rock when he saw my thought.

"My podner," I asked, trying to keep my voice steady; "what did you do to my podner? I staked this location and you know it; I left my podner in charge. If you've hurt him I'll skin you alive. Jump my claim all you want, but tell me about my podner. What have you done with him?"

"Nobody was here when I lit," he answered, his face showing me plain that he was telling the truth. I ain't seen hide nor hair of a human in thirty miles." My heart sank low as I looked helplessly about; the great rough country around me menacing the little fellow. Then a light lit up the fellow's eyes. "Hold on," he called, as I started to walk off. "I did speak to a runty, long-haired lunatic dancing like a tarantula, down to Red Mesa. I spoke to him but he didn't see me. Plumb loco, he was."

Like a flash I saw it all and, as I saw, everything got a hazy red, like seeing thru a bloody veil. I didn't answer, just turned on my heel and headed toward Red Mesa. If I had asked Podner to guard the location; if I had wanted him to stay behind; if I had dreamed of hinting that he should neglect his poem, give me his hour—then I wouldn't have cared. But it had all been his own idea. And the idea had been such a comfort to me, had warmed my heart so, made me forget so many things I'd always felt hard about, forget the wife who ran away, forget Joe Ellwood whose blood I thirsted for, had put love in me where hate had bubbled before—that was the hurt of it. Podner, who had healed all my bitterness, uncovered fresh springs of gall within me, made them run strong as they had in the beginning—springs that had been suffering droughts—Podner had done this to me—the little fellow whom I liked so much.

Liked so much, but hated now—hated with a black hate. My fingers itched to finish up what consumption had begun, itched to tear down what this country had almost healed. I hadn't asked him to stay, to give me anything. He had done it himself, all of it. He had made me happy, glad, only to turn my feelings round to this. I had figured on him because he had asked me to, had made me figure on him, and he had fooled me. And, with every thought, I walked the faster, hating—hating——

Sudden, as you round the Devil's Slide, I came upon him. He was sitting as I'd seen him sit so many days, sitting as I had left him mornings and as I would find him nights—facing Red Mesa. His back was hunched over till his face was buried on his arms, folded upon his knees. Beside him was the pad of paper, lying on the ground. I looked at him, wondering how I could ever have thought him pitiful. He was puny, miserable now—an ant that dared to look upon Red Mesa, which was only made for men, real men, to look upon.

Soft, I slipped up behind him, hating him for sleeping—sleeping while my location was being jumped; sleeping three miles away from my location which he'd volunteered to guard, against my return. Worthless, a loafer, an ant! Doc had told me, had seen his real nature. Doc had been right and I was an old fool. He knew, Doc did, why the paper pad was always empty. I picked it up from the ground, sneering on the little fellow's back. But the pad wasn't white now, wasn't empty. It was covered with writing, writing which I started to read, sneering on the back of the man who slept three miles away from the location he allowed to be stolen. And then I sneered no more, nor I didn't hate no more, nor the springs of bitterness didn't gush so strong, for I was reading Podner's poem.

Everybody knows it now, every one's read it; but they don't know it, never have read it as I did—Podner sleeping there, worn out and happy; Red Mesa blazing at my feet, and off a ways the black shadows folding up the mountained wilderness of burning rocks and tucking them away for the night. And there was the poem in my hands that took it all—Red Mesa by day and by night and Red Mesa now, and chucked it all on a piece of paper not much bigger than a patch in my pants. All the colors of Red Mesa were on that piece of paper; every rock in Red Mesa was there; every ravine, canyon, hill, valley of Red Mesa wa son it; the Lord, as he chucked Red Mesa out of Heaven, was caught in the act.

But that wasn't all. As I read it, I could hear the tinkle of a burro's bells, could see a burro's mallet head poking round the corner of a gorgeous ledge—and it wouldn't have been Red Mesa without a burro. And that ain't half. Tho there wasn't a word about woman in the poem, there wasn't a word of it all that wasn't woman, didn't make me see woman. It was Podner's woman—the woman he'd seen, in the moon, the woman he'd seen looking in the bookstore window, with tear-mists in her eyes which she didn't know nor care about. For she had read the poem which was in my hands, the woman he had seen in his mind and only there, the ideal woman he was calling to in the poem.

And because she was the woman he had never seen, the woman who was in his head, the woman he was calling, she was my woman, too. She was the woman I had seen, the woman who was my wife, the woman I had been calling back for twenty long years. Not a word of woman in the poem, mind you, and it was all woman, my woman, to me; everybody's woman to everybody—and that's why everybody likes it so. She was there, all thru it, and I could see her, hear her, hear her, feel her near me—the woman who had run away with Joe Ellwood.

I MUST have made a noise, for Podner suddenly straightened, his startled eyes meeting mine; then his voice came out, frightened, husky:

"My God! The claim, the location! What is it? What——"

For all the locations, the developed mines in the Rockies, I wouldn't have told him; wouldn't have told him that the location was gone. But he must have read it on my face—the answer. He jumped up, his eyes glaring, his hands gripping tight on my shoulders as he swung my face to his eyes, reading me and what had happened. Suddenly his hands dropped at his sides and his spirit seemed to crumple up inside him.

"And it is—gone," he muttered to himself. "I left your claim and it is—gone." He looked up into my eyes, same way a doe once looked at me when I came up close to finish her. "Something drew me here to Red Mesa, Pete. I fought against it, struggled with it, but it drew me here. I couldn't stop, Pete. It was stronger than I—stronger—and it hauled me here." His eyes dropped, big tears in them, when he saw I didn't care; but when he looked up again, the tears were gone and his face was grim as granite.

"I'm going back, Pete," he said quietly. "If your location has been jumped, I'll get it back for you. I'm stronger now."

All the three miles I argued, pleaded with him, pointing out how nothing could be done, as how this claim jumper could pot us we came on him. But, as I said before, women and men like Podner, ain't reasonable. When we got in sight of the location, the tent the claim jumper had thrown, he made me stop.

"Stay here, Pete, until I call you. If the location is lost I'll get it back. You are strong and I am weak; the man could fight you and he can't fight me. Stay here until I call you."

Funny how he knew the reason he got things when I'd never been able to. He was weak, and strong men couldn't fight him so they just naturally had to like him. Stay? Of course I stayed. Podner had a way of getting what he wanted. I stayed there, my mind burning up with pictures of that black bearded pirate dancing on the little fellow's frame, my feet itching to get inside that tent. The breeze was getting a file-tip edge on it while I waited, then the claim jumper threw aside the fly of his tent and waved to me.

Don't know why, reckon it must have been the old pirate's manner, made me step soft as I looked inside. At one end of the tent was a table and on the table was a candle and beside the candle was Podner's poem. Podner was occupying the shakedown in the corner, one arm thrown across his chest, the holy sort of look on his face which I knew so well. His breath was coming and going, deep and strong as any one's, his lips smiling gentle like.

The fellow who had stolen my claim put his fingers on his lips, tiptoeing to the shakedown and hauling the blanket higher on Podner's neck, then stepped to the table and took up the pad where Podner had written his poem.

"Reckon we'd better build a fire outside," he whispered to me. "The little feller's plumb wrastled hisself out, fightin' fer you.

"I've been making medicine with th' little feller," he said, after we'd built the fire outside and sat a long time in silence. "He's been beggin' me t' give back your location, tellin' me how it happened. Have you read it?" he asked, holding out the pad of paper with Podner's poem on it and waiting till I took it. "I ain't what you might call educated," he goes on embarrassed like. "Th' little feller read it out loud once—would you mind doin' it agin, stranger? I had a notion when I heard it that I can't seem to locate in my head."

I grinned, for I thought I knew what was pestering him, and read it over once more, finding more wonders in it, forgetting the man across the fire, seeing the woman clear. He reached out and took it away when I'd finished, spelling it out slowly, shaking his head as his dirty thumb traveled down the lines.

"Nary mention of her," he muttered, looking at me queer. "But stranger, there's a woman in this thing somewhere. It puts me in mind of a woman I married once. I run away with her. She was a dance-hall woman in Cripple's old days——"

He didn't make a move as I sprang to my feet, my hand jerking by instinct toward the left arm pit where I always stashed my gun. His face was looking into mine, a curious expression on it. And, in that second, I knew him for Joe Ellwood, the one I'd prayed to meet up with for twenty years.

"Sit down, Pete," he said quietly. "We'll wrastle it out. I banked your fires dirty, Pete, but it's tough t' love a woman."

"Where is she?" That was my one thought and it came quick.

HE THREW his big hands in a wide gesture that might have meant anything. It riled me bad for you don't

(Concluded on Page 20.)

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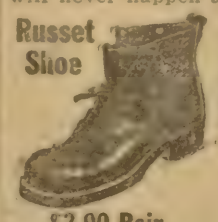

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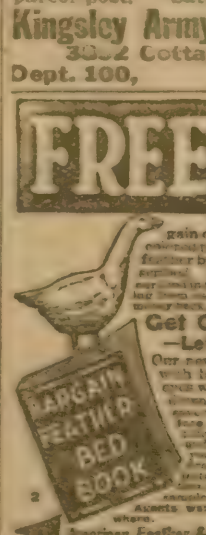

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PETTICOATS and PLOWHANDLES

By Angus MacGregor

Joshua Leered at Her. "Well, What's Yer Fust Orders, Boss?"

JOSHUA SIMMONS finished his breakfast, drank the last of his coffee, and shoved back his chair from the table with a rasping scrape along the floor. His wife glared at him angrily.

"Haven't I told you about three times a day that I wish you'd lift your chair when you get up, an' not scrape all the varnish off the floor?"

Easy-going, provocative Joshua smiled back at her with an irritating air.

"I reckon so. Jest 'bout that number o' times."

"Well, why don't you pay a little attention to it?" she snapped.

"Naow, naow, keep ca'm, Mother. How be I goin' to git up 'thout movin' my chair? Didn't I lay this floor? An' varnish it? An' who's got a better right to scratch it up?" He leaned back so that the rear legs of his chair dented the surface, and pulled out a blackened pipe from his pocket.

Mrs. Simmon's gray eyes flashed. "There you go again. You're the aggravatinest man, Joshua Simmons, that ever breathed. Just look at that floor! Haven't I told you a thousand times that I wish you'd clean the manure off your feet before you come in to sit down at the table? Phew! How do you suppose I can eat my breakfast if you track in a lot o' manure from the barn under the table?"

"Dunno, an' dunno's if I care. Yer breakfast's on the table, ain't it?"

Little Mrs. Alvah Simmons sighed deeply, and hastily excused herself from the table. Her husband's father and mother were at it again. She set her teeth hard as more sounds of wrangling came from the dining-room, and snatched up a pan of cracked corn. In the comparative quiet of the chicken-house, she flung handfuls of corn to the surging hens, who clucked and crowded and fought about her, while a tumult of bitter thoughts ran riot thru her brain.

Her good-looking young husband also shoved back from the table, and started for the barn. "Sho, now Honey," he had told her over and over again, "Ma an' Pa don't mean anything by it. It's just their way o' arguin'. They've been doin' that now for more than thirty-five years, an' it's just their way. Ye mustn't mind a little thing like that."

Alvah could stand it, she reflected. He hadn't been used to anything else, and had acepted it as a matter of course. But the continual domestic warfare grated on her more sensitive ears. "I hate this old farm!" she muttered, and stamped her foot so hard that a too inquisitive biddy fled with a frightened squawk and rumpled feathers. "I hate this narrow, fussy little village! I hate this continual bickering and squabbling, and this talk of nothing in the world but 'scraps.' Oh, I'm so lonesome I could just about die!"

She emptied the last of the pan of corn, and a great round tear welled out of the corner of each blue eye, and rolled slowly down a pink cheek.

She wiped them off hastily. Alvah was coming, and it wouldn't do to let him see her with tears in her eyes. Alvah didn't like crying women.

It had been almost a year since Alvah Simmons had led her to his home as a June bride. She had been glad to give up her school in the yellow schoolhouse down in the gully for the straight-backed, black-haired young farmer, who danced a little better, was just a trifle handsomer—and made love just a little better than any other fellow in the village. The old farmhouse out on the mill road was a picturesque affair, with great rosebushes in the dooryard, and clematis and Virginia creeper running up high over the front of the house, and the mellow air of age over the place. It had seemed romantic, kindly, with its rolling knolls and its waving fields of oats and hay. Pa Simmons had seemed a likable, genial old soul, and Mother Simmons a woman who concealed a big heart under a brusque exterior.

Alvah had brought her home to the old place. "For a while we'd better live with the old folks," he had told her. "It costs a lot to fix up a place of our own, but we'll have one in a year or two. Perhaps we can buy the Ben Dyer place at the village. But I guess we can get along at home for a little while."

She had assented, willingly, gladly, even. Anywhere that Alvah wanted to go, she would have been perfectly contented. She would have followed him to the end of the earth. If he had said, "Let's go on the top of Burnt-Coat Mountain an' live there," she would have gone with him cheerfully and unhesitatingly.

But a year of living at the old place had worn off the illusion. She realized only too fully that Pa Simmons, in spite of his bluff geniality, his hail-fellow-well-met greeting to every passing neighbor, was a curious bundle of improvident generosity and personal selfishness. He was shiftless in his business arrangements, careless about his personal habits, and "hard to get along with." He swore roundly at the cattle and horses, and sometimes at his wife; he lost his temper and belabored the cows with a stick of cordwood; he tracked manure and dirt into the house; he lit his pipe and flung the matches into the corner of the room; now and then he spat on the floor; he blew his nose thru his fingers; and her critical mind went on enumerating his shortcomings till it seemed as if there were no end.

She told herself that Mother Simmons, for all her motherly big heart, had a sharp tongue and a quick temper; that she was unreasonable and "sot" in her views; that daily quarreling with her husband had dulled her finer sensibilities. The old farmhouse, which had seemed picturesque and romantic, now appeared merely rickety, frowsy and ill-kept. The rolling knolls, which had charmed her by their beauty, now appeared merely as tyrannical monsters on which crops could be raised only with infinite labor, hard, grinding, back-breaking toil from sunrise till dusk.

Still—her heart thrilled a little at the sight of her stalwart young husband swinging along from the rear of the barn. He put his arm around her, "bussed" her in true loverlike fashion, and took the pan from her hand.

"Alvah," she asked him, determined to take the opportunity, "Can't you let me have a little money? I want to go down to the store and get some percale for a new house dress. This one is almost worn out."

He Flushed and Strode Off to His Work in the Lower Field.

A CLOUD appeared on Alvah's face. He thrust his hands into his pockets uneasily. "Well, Alice, I don't know," he confessed. "Can't you get along a leetle while? You see, money's awful tight this time o' year. There ain't nothin' comi' in, nothin' whatever 'cept what we get out o' the eggs an' buter, an' they've both dropped to bottom prices."

Her face fell. A little wrinkle appeared between her eyes, and her lips shut in a tight line.

"Alvah, I've heard that since the middle of the winter. Isn't there anything on this farm raised to bring in some money? How do you get along?"

He shifted his weight uneasily from one foot to the other. "Well, Sam trusts us at the store till we get somethin' in, an' the apples in the fall pay somethin', an' the eggs an' butter, an'—an'——"

"Alvah Simmons," she flashed out at him, "do you mean to tell me that all the ready money that you get on this farm is what comes in from the orchard and these few chickens and milk?"

"Well, I guess that's so," he admitted sheepishly. "Unless'n we sell a cow, or a pig, or somethin'."

"Alvah, I thought you were a better planner than that," she flamed out at him.

"Well, Pa says there's no money in farmin', anyway. All he can do is to get a livin' out of it."

"Yes, and a mighty poor one at that," she retorted. She strode off toward the house, with her crestfallen husband following.

Joshua Simmons had rolled out to the kitchen, and settled down in his chair behind the stove for his after-breakfast smoke. He fumbled in his pockets and extracted a few meager crumbs of tobacco. These he jammed into the bottom of his pipe, surveyed it with dissatisfaction, and lit it with a chip from the stove.

"It's powerful disapp'intin'," he grumbled. "'Backer's gone up to 15 cents for a leetle slice that's only 'bout half as big as ye useter git—an' it's purty tuff when ye have to go without 'cause ye can't scare up the 15 cents. Hard lines, I call it."

Alice had come in from the henyard, and heard his complaints. She looked suggestively at the clock on the shelf, which was striking 9, and at the figure of the old man slouched in his chair. She had never before ventured to criticise her father or mother-in-law, but this morning her blood was up, and she was thoroly angry—angry not only on their account, but because her husband was drifting into the same shiftless ways—losing his new-found ambition, and rapidly acquiring a "what's the use?" spirit.

"Why don't you raise something that will bring in some ready money?" she demanded. "You need tobacco, I need a new dress, we need lots of things around the farm. There isn't a thing planted besides the garden for the things we'll eat this summer. Why not plant something that we can sell?"

The old man looked at her in mild toleration, as at a child who talks about something that it does not fully understand. "Ain't no money in farmin'," he grumbled. "Tried raisin' stuff for the market two year ago. Planted three acre o' sweet corn. Worked all summer on it, an' liked to kill myself a-doin' of it. Come a frost jest a day or two 'fore it was ready to take to the factory, an' I never got a cent out of it for my summer's work. Wasn't even good for fodder."

"But there are other things besides sweet corn," argued the girl, unconvinced. "Your land is late, and subject to early frosts in the fall. You take chances every time you plant that. There are plenty of other things that are in demand, aren't there?"

The old man's eyes opened wide. "Why, bless ye, girl," he chuckled, "Ye talks 's if ye know more 'bout runnin' the farm than us men-folks that's lived on it all our lives. Ye talk jest like some o' them green city fellers that think pumkins grow on bushes, an' wouldn't know which end o' a cow the milk comes from. Shaw, don't worry yer head 'bout them things. You folks tend to runnin' the house, an' let us run the farm, same's we've allers done."

"I don't see any ready money comin' out of it," persisted the girl. "We've got nothing planted now that will bring in money to pay the bills. It isn't possible that the milk from two cows and the eggs from fifteen or twenty hens will pay the bills during the summer, is it?"

The old man stiffened, and his good-humored tolerance changed to temper. "I s'pose ye can tell me things 'bout runnin' my own business," he snapped. "I was runnin' this farm long 'fore ye was born, an' I cal'late I know a leetle somethin' yit." He rose and stamped off into the barn.

A look of deep concern came over Alvah's face. "You oughtn't to talk to Pa like that," he chided his wife. "It—it don't seem just right. An' he has been runnin' this farm ever since he was a young man. It stands to reason that he knows the most about what it will do."

Her anger had faded down to dull listlessness. "All right, Alvah, have it your own way," she agreed. "I've got to have some money for clothes and things. The superintendent wants me to take the fall term of school down at the village, and I guess I will."

A frown came over his face. "Why, no, that won't do. People would think—why, they'd say that I aint supportin' you properly. It's a husband's place to provide for his wife."

"Well, are you?" she answered quietly.

and started straight for her own room.

Ma Simmons stopped her. She had been an interested spectator of the colloquy, her hands on her ample hips, and a quizzical look on her strong features. She put an arm around her daughter-in-law's shoulders.

"Alvah, Alice's right. I've been arguin' with your father for more'n thirty-five years, and he's just pigheaded enough to keep on in the way that he always did. We live from hand to mouth, we're always in debt, there ain't never any ready money to pay the bills or buy things. He never had no business head, nor never will have. He's a good worker, I will say that. There ain't a lazy bone in his body. But he don't never seem to take advantage o' things, never seemed to plan 't all."

"This farm could be put on a paying basis, I know," persisted the girl quietly. "The land's rich, there's plenty of stock, and Alvah and his father work hard—sometimes harder than is really necessary. There's a leak somewhere."

Alvah sniffed. "Maybe you womenfolks know better'n we how to do things," he observed acridly.

Joshua came in from the barn scraping his boots, his good humor partially restored. "Gimme them eggs," he observed. "Goin' out to the store. Got to git a couple o' bags o' corn for them horses. It's awful, too, what they're askin'! Four dollars a bag for corn, an' almost as much for mixed feed. It's robbery, that's whut it is. No wonder a poor man can't get along."

HE CHEWED his empty pipe. "Sol Mayo wants me to go over an trim up his orchard for him, he observed. "He'll pay me two dollars a day for that. That'll help get in a leetle cash."

"How do ye spose that will fit in with the General Manager's plans?" sneered his son. "The women folks think we ain't doin' things just right."

The old gentleman laughed. "What do women folks know about runnin' a farm?" he cackled. "I'd like to see where we'd git off 'f they was runnin' things. We'd be so far in the hole——"

"Now you stop right there, Joshua Simmons," declared his wife with emphasis. "We couldn't run it any worse than you have. If ye did give us a chance, I'll bet there'd be more money at the end of the year than we've got now."

"Naow, I'll tell ye," rejoined the old man. "Ye're talkin' mighty high an' toplofty. If ye think ye're so smart, I'll jest take ye. Alvah an' I'll jest let ye two smarties go ahead an' run things for this summer, an' see where ye land. We'll let ye be bosses, if ye want to, an' we'll jest let the neighborhood see what women-folks can do. What d'ye say to that?"

He ran his gaze over the circle with a triumphant glare. Ma Simmons looked at her daughter-in-law with an odd expression. Alice had an unfathomable look in her eyes. She looked fair at the exulting old man.

"Do you mean that, Pa Simmons? Will you and Alvah put yourselves under our orders? Will you let us be the real managers of the farm, and will you do the work, the heavy work?"

A peculiar look came over the old man's face. "'F I'm so durn poor a manager, I'm gittin' 'bout ready to retire," he snapped. "It's a bargin. Only, ye provide me with all the 'baccer an' grub I want, an' ye can pay the bills an' git the experience. Ye'll git sick enough o' it before ye git thru."

The girl's mouth set tight in a grim little smile. "And you, too, Alvah? Will you agree to it?"

He looked incredulous. "Don't talk foolishness," he complained.

"It isn't foolishness. It's a business trade. Are you game enough to try it?"

He nodded decisively. "'Tain't right nor reasonable, but—yes, I'll give it a try."

A smile played over Alice's face. "It's a bargain," she said quietly. "If I don't make good, you can put all the blame on me."

Joshua leered at her. "Well, what's yer fust orders, Boss? Any objection to my trimmin' Sol Mayo's trees?"

Alice's eyes narrowed slightly. "Yes. If you'd spend the same time or your own spare time taking care of your own orchard that you do with your neighbors', you'd find a good many more dollars in your pockets. You've got the makings of one of the best orchards in the county——"

"Two hundred o' the finest trees that was ever put into ground," the old man boasted. "Them northern spies my father set out just 'fore he died, an' them bellflowers, an'——"

"And you're the best orchard man and grafter within fifty miles," the girl added. "But you don't work on your own trees. You trim up and graft all the neighbors', and put them into condition to get the top market price. If you gave the same attention to your own orchard——"

"Don't git time," mumbled the old man.

"You were going to take three or four days of next week," declared his son's wife. "Suppose you take that same time and put into your own orchard."

She went on. "Another thing. There are at least thirty or forty different varieties out there. Last fall you had nearly a barrel or so left of as many different kinds, because there weren't enough of any one kind to make up a barrel—or a lot of any sort. Most of those—good, first quality fruit—were fed out to the hogs. It takes twice as much time, too, to keep all those varieties separated."

"Well, everybody on the farm wanted this kind and that kind left because they liked 'em to eat," protested Joshua. "When Alvah was a little feller, he allus liked them speckled beauties an' Porters. His ma likes them sweets an' golden russets. Them black oxfords allus keep well. My father allus liked bellflowers an' them Tallman sweets. We allus had a few red astrachan an' bell's earlies for summer apples——"

"If you'd graft those into standard brands that will sell, no matter how well you like them personally to eat, you'd be dollars better off," remarked the girl. "It doesn't make much difference how well we like any particular variety of fruit or vegetable, if the buyers don't. You've told me yourself you can't market anything but a red apple to advantage. If you graft those odds and ends to Baldwins, northern spies or MacIntosh reds, they'd sell—even if you don't like them quite so well yourself."

"MacIntosh spots, an' is hard to raise," protested the old man.

"Then spray them. All the more reason, too, why you get a high price for them. They fetch $10 or $12 a barrel, don't they?"

She went on mercilessly. "There are fifteen or twenty natural fruit trees down by the orchard wall. You never gather them, and nobody gets them but the cows, and they make themselves sick every fall. Why don't you graft them into something that's worth while?"

"Well, I've allus been talking of it," declared Joshua. "Somehow I've never got around to it, tho."

"Well, let's get around to it, right now," declared Alvah, who had been a silent witness of the dialog. "I believe she's right. Let's get after these trees this morning. The horse is all harnessed. Mother or Alice can go out to the store after the corn."

THE two men went with unusual enthusiasm at their task, while Alice changed her dress. Her pretty forehead wrinkled some more.

"Mother," she asked, "What use do we make of all these horses? Here we're buying corn for five, with corn more than $4 a bag. But there isn't a workhorse among them. We use old Molly for cultivating and doing a little light plowing. But we always have to hire Jed Peters and his heavy horses to do the spring plowing. Queenie neither Alvah nor his father will use in the field. They say she's too good for that. 'Can't afford to use a $300 driving horse for haying or farm work,' they say. But we don't use her for driving once a week. And Cynthia won't work with Molly, and she's so frightened of automobiles that you can't use her for a driving horse. There are five horses, that have to be fed and shod and taken care of, and there isn't one of them that's earning her own keep, or turning in a cent in money. There's one big leak right there."

"I don't know but you're right," admitted the elder Mrs. Simmons. "But we couldn't stand to let anybody else have old Molly. And we've raised all these horses from colts, and it seems like parting with some of the family to let them go."

"We can't afford to be sentimental this way," declared the younger woman. "We're not in a position to keep $300 driving horses which we don't use, nor light horses which aren't any use around the farm. There's money enough right in them to dispose of them all, and get a pair of medium-sized work horses that we can use—and even a light truck. Why, just look at the market at Avondale and Camden furnish—two big summer resorts, only ten or a dozen miles away. We could raise stuff and send it right down there the same day it was picked—work up a profitable market in truck gardening." Her eyes danced with enthusiasm.

"Well, it'll be a pretty hard thing to convince your father-in-law and Alvah," the older woman sighed. "They set a great store by them horses."

It was a hard thing. Alvah's handsome colt and the bony old mare that had carried them to church and school and market for so many long years were the especial stumbling blocks. But the five horses were disposed of, and two stocky bays installed in their place, animals which made short work of the haying and cultivating and heavy hauling. The orchard was trimmed up and grafted, dressing hauled out from the barn cellar and heaped around the trees, and the neglected, starved branches took on a new lease of life. It was a good apple year, and the small green globules set by myriads, giving promise of a bountiful crop in early autumn.

"What are you keeping all this young stock for?" she asked the old man. "We've only two or at the most three cows, and all but one of these calves are bulls. What's the use of raising them and spending so much on feed?"

"I been aiming to raise me a pair of

(Continued on Page 15.)

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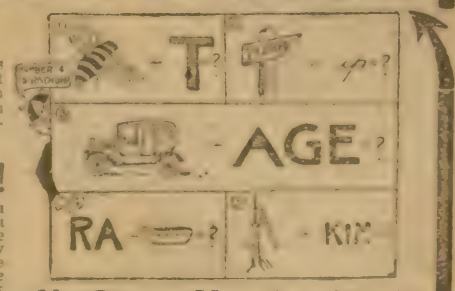

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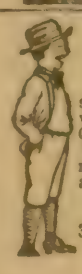

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Waitin' Peeley's Vigil

(Continued From Page 4)

dismount. At her failure she peremptorily demanded in a hoarse, strained tone which evidently cost her a great effort of the will:

"You just let me down off here now; you just do it."

"No, you stay right where you are, young lady. I'm going to take you home. You're not able to go there by yourself." Barry's tones were not persuasive, but determinedly commanding.

"I won't; I just won't," cried the girl and made as if to carry out her intention.

"Oh, yes, you will, my lady." And lightly but effectively Barry tightened his arm.

"I h-hate you. I just do." Helpless, impotent rage racked her.

Barry marked the quaver in her voice as he felt the fierce tremor of her body.

"That's all right, little lady," he made comment with soothing good nature, "but since you're not in fit condition to go it alone, you'll just have to let Jerry and me go with you."

"No, no, you mustn't," she protested feebly, "'cause—'cause Pap'll let daylight th-th——"

The next moment her body relaxed against Barry and she shook with hard gasping sobs. Turning his head slightly he saw big tears coursing down over her wan, bruised face.

"Don't, please don't," pleaded Barry, sympathetic and embarrassed. But the girl sobbed on, her body lying laxily against him. Not knowing just what sort of word sympathy to offer under such conditions, Barry hid his embarrassment under an attack upon poor Jerry, now loitering and feeding along [illegible]

"You Jerry, get to blazes out of this. What you doing anyhow, you old rascal," he cried sharply. Slowly and deliberately the sedate Jerry ceased nibbling at bits of enticing shrubbery and plodded unconcernedly onward. Gradually the girl's sobs subsided and Barry thought from her deep, regular breathing that she slept.

AT LENGTH they emerged on a small flat, sparsely timbered with tamaracks and a few clumps of firs, at the foot of Baldy Knob. With slow preciseness Jerry took the up-trail. As the ascent began the girl came suddenly to life.

"You must go back now," she cried hoarsely. "Let me off and you go back quick or Pap'll kill you. Let me off, I tell you." She struggled feebly against Barry's arm of iron.

"No," he said decisively; "I'm going to take you right to your door."

"No, no," she protested vehemently, "Pap'll think you're one of them and—and——" Her voice trailed off incoherently. The sudden exertion had been too much for her. Weakly she subsided into the snug hollow of Barry's welcoming arm, and they moved on upward.

Barry soon saw that the earthquake had left its mark on the rude cabin also. The chimney had fallen and the cabin itself had been shaken from its supports and slewed partly around down hill. From the rear he heard sounds of hammering. He gave a short halloo.

The hammering ceased with swift abruptness. The next instant a veritable giant of a man stepped around the corner, his countenance stern and forbidding. At sight of Barry and the burro a great flame of wrath flared across his face, and before Barry could utter a word of explanation he started forward with the wild bellow of a mad bull. But the same moment the girl with a painful effort started up, screaming, "Stop, Pap, stop!"

With bulging eyes, not having noted the girl before, the giant obeyed, his jaw falling and the flame in his face fading. "Wh—what's this?" he stammered.

"Your daughter was injured by the quake, and I brought her home," Barry shot in quickly.

With a mighty stride the giant reached Jerry, brushed Barry abruptly aside and gathered the girl into his huge arms, crooing over her like a plantation mother. "Oh, Honey Rose, Honey Rose, are you hurt bad? Never mind, Honey Rose, your old Pap'll fix you up all right."

He carried her limp form into the cabin and placed her tenderly down on a crude couch covered with skins, then proceeded to minister deftly to her needs, mothering her and crooning softly to her the while.

From the doorway Barry watched with sympathetic eye and hearty admiration. He liked that big mother-man at once. There was something about him that appealed deeply to Barry's highest and best instincts. He might be "nuts," as that old rascal had said, but there was one thing sure: he was a man with a big warm heart, no matter how little his previous actions had demonstrated such fact to outsiders.

When he had eased his daughter's pain somewhat and soothed her into quiet restfulness, he suddenly noted Barry in the doorway. His great face darkened instantly, and throwing his heavy bulk forward he bellowed:

"What! You here yet?"

"Why, sure," Barry returned complacently. "Anything I can do?"

"Yes," the big man bellowed belligerently, "you can take yourself and that jackass out o' here mighty pronto, and don't you ever let me set eyes on you around here again, or——" Barry saw a long arm sweep toward a dark corner and come back into the light with an old Winchester in its hand. The next moment the muzzle tilted toward him.

"But I want to be sure the young lady gets along all right," Barry protested.

"You move, and quick," the big man commanded hoarsely, taking a step forward, and throwing a shell into the rifle's barrel as he did so.

Barry saw a light in the big blue eyes that he did not fancy at all and speedily concluded that prompt obedience was the utmost desire of his heart just about then and moved away with alacrity, managing to imbue Jerry with some of his own speed spirit.

"WELL, that's some fine reception after saving his daughter and seeing her safe home, I must say," stormed Barry. After a little he laughed lightly and added: "But I like the old duffer just the same. Maybe he's got good reasons for fighting shy of people. Anyway, I'm going to hang around and see how that girl gets along, but I'll use a little caution."

The next day, carefully circumspect, he approached the cabin on Baldy Knob from an entirely different direction from that of the previous day. He saw no signs of life about the place.

Silently he stole around to the front of the cabin. The door stood ajar. Cautiously he peeped in. Upon the skin-covered couch against the farther wall he saw her whom he sought. She was lying very still, her head swathed in white bandages. He could see nothing of the grim old giant. He rapped softly on the door, alert and ready for instant action should the old ogre be lying in wait for him. At his knock the girl on the cot came to life with swift suddenness, rose and swung her feet to the floor, facing him. Despite the wrappings Barry saw that she was very pale. A wild alarm lighted her eyes as she cried:

"Oh, why did you come back? Go, go quick before Pap comes. He'll kill you sure now if he finds you here. Go, please go," she pleaded in half-moaning accents.

Lightly Barry stepped into the room, all his instincts for caution scattered to the four winds.

"But I can't go," he expostulated; "until I'm sure you are all right."

"Oh, I'm going to be all right," she conceded hurriedly; "only my head was hurt much." Then alarm possessing her again she cried: "Oh, you must go. The earthquake caused something to happen, and Pap's wild now; he'll kill any stranger on sight while he's watching and waiting. Oh, do go, please go," she urged, sorely perplexed and frightened.

"That quake sure did cause something to happen," Barry answered easily, ignoring her persistent pleadings and stepping nearer. "It certainly didn't know how to treat a lady, but it did something that suits me to perfection."

At the last sentence the fear and bewilderment in the girl's eyes gave way to a sudden baleful fire of hate and distrust. She half rose, bent forward, and cried:

"You sneak! that's what you're up to, is it? I thought you were one of them when I found your camp. Now, you go—and go quick!"

She stepped toward a corner, but with instant comprehension of her purpose Barry, by quick spring, forestalled her, snatched up the rifle there before she could lay hands on it and swung it behind him, saying:

"No, no, not that." Then very earnestly, "My dear young lady you are mistaken, tho I don't quite get your meaning on being 'one of them.'"

With a baffled cry that sounded to Barry like that of a cornered wild animal, she backed to the couch, exclaiming, "I hate you, hate you, hate you!" Then, overcome by her weakness and the stress of her emotion, she sank panting upon the couch and glared helplessly and savagely at him, her moving lips repeating the phrase inaudibly.

The next moment blank dismay swept her features and a startled little cry fluttered from between her parted lips. Barry heard a swift step behind him but before he could face about the rifle was snatched from his hand and a powerful arm shoved him aside, almost knocking him off his feet. As he caught himself a mad roar reverberated thru the cabin and an angry voice thundered:

"You sneaking hound, I'll soon send you where you'll never get a bit of it."

TURNING, Barry found himself face to face with the giant whose massive features were twisting with deadly, purposeful hate. Even as he turned the mad man leveled the rifle at him, his distorted face agleam with revengeful joy. In one swift awful moment Barry realized there was no escaping the giant's terrible intent, expressed in that deadly muzzle pointed at his heart. Too paralyzed to move he made no attempt to save himself. Just before the loud detonation of the death-dealing weapon filled the narrow space of the room with thunderous echoes, he heard a scream, a wild cry of "Don't, Pap!" and saw the girl bound like a panther from the couch and knock the barrel of the leveled rifle upward. The wind of the gun's explosion fanned his face.

Partly unnerved by his narrow escape he stood still, dizzily undecided until the girl's screaming command, "Run, run for your life," brought him to a realization of his peril. He saw her pale face turned toward him in mute appeal as she clung to the rifle in an attempt to prevent the giant from throwing another cartridge into its chamber.

At the sight Barry gathered all his distraught forces. In one bound he was thru the doorway; in another, around the corner. As he leaped into a screening patch of brush he caught the girl's voice pleading wildly, "Oh, don't Pap!"

Pausing, he wondered what was taking place back in the cabin. Was the girl being punished for her act of saving him? He was sorely tempted to tarry and find out, but he realized instantly how foolhardy and useless such a course would be, unarmed as he was. Barry felt pretty sure that the giant, demented tho he might be, would not really harm his daughter, his love for her being too strong.

Following the ravine until he had reached the foot of Baldy Knob, he stole across the tamarack-dotted meadow, keeping to the cover of the brush as much as possible. He breathed easier then and felt that his safety was secure so; boldly crossing a bit of open space, he paused at the edge of a clump of firs and looked back up the hill. He glimpsed the big man standing out in front of the cabin, rifle at shoulder. He saw no sign of the girl. The next instant the rifle spoke and a bullet cut the dirt beside him. With a startled cry he leaped swiftly into the protection of the firs. Another bullet whanged in the branches over his head; a third thudded into the trunk of a small fir with a vicious "clut." Keeping himself carefully hidden from the man on the hill, Barry crawled away thru the underbrush, breathing rather irregularly at his narrow escape.

Once as he paused he imagined he heard low chuckling laughter from a brushy knoll to his left. He flattened swiftly against the ground and listened intently. Carefully he scanned each rock and bush on the knoll, but could see no sign of any one. And altho he lingered for some time, straining his ears, he heard nothing more. "Must have been mistaken," he breathed, crawling cautiously ahead, "but I could have sworn I heard some one laughing, and it had a familiar sound." Warily he forged ahead, keeping a sharp lookout, and finally reached camp without further misadventure.

Throwing himself down on his blankets Barry's mind immediately busied itself with a series of disconcerting and perplexing questions. If he had really heard some one laugh there in the brush above him—and he felt certain now that he had—then who was it? And why were they hiding there, failing to make themselves known? "What are they prowling around there for?" he asked himself. "For no good purpose, I'll be bound," he added. Then another point bothered him: What did the girl mean by saying the quake had caused something to happen—something that made her father ready to kill a stranger on sight while he watched and waited? She had certainly been right about the last. His two narrow escapes from the big fellow's bullets left him no doubt on that score.

JUST how the quake was responsible for the big fellow's increased bloodthirstiness he couldn't figure out. He wondered if it had anything to do with that five-year vigil. Well, it might and then again it mightn't, was as far as he could get along that line. Another point on which he was in doubt was with regard to the girl. Barry gave some time to the consideration of this. How strangely she had acted! She had seemed a bit sociable at first and anxious for his safety; then suddenly ready to shoot him herself. Then when her father had tried to do the job, she had frustrated him by the narrowest of margins.

For a moment Barry felt he had played a coward's part, deserting the girl in extremity to save his own skin. The feeling soon passed, however, for he firmly believed deep down in his soul that there was an innate something about the big man that would forever restrain him from violence toward the loved one. Then he suddenly recalled the man's remark just before the first shot: "I'll soon send you where you'll never get a bit of it." A bit of what? Barry wondered. He didn't know, but it might be a good thing for him to find out. Did that slinking father and son know? Ten to one they did; that's why they had tried to frighten him away. Well, there was one thing he did know:

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He was going to stick around awhile.

Having come to this one certain conclusion Barry got up and prepared himself a good square meal. It would be well to be in good trim physically for what might lie ahead, he opined. Next, he determined to change the location of his camp. But he decided it would be wise policy to wait until after dark for that. No doubt that vile father and son had ferreted out his location—might even be spying on him right now, for all he knew.

At the thought Barry glanced warily about over the rubbish strewn around by the earth's mad antics. While so doing a wild theory shot thru his head, half stunning him and making him fighting mad at the same time. Were they contemplating kidnaping the girl? he asked himself. He remembered now that the gossipy old rascal of a father had spoken of another girl the son had taken a fancy to, but that might have been intended for a blind. He felt sure the son still coveted the "catamount," despite the father's assertion to the contrary. At this thought Barry was more certain than ever that he would be found sticking around.

While awaiting the coming of night he laid his plans and made the most of his opportunity to gain a little sleep and rest.

When darkness fell Barry struck camp and led Jerry over the ridge; then with only the stars for guide he struck out for the opposite side of the valley. He found making his way in the dark across an utterly strange country a slow and difficult task, especially so since fallen trees and other refuse interposed by the earthquake now obstructed the natural way.

After an arduous trip he finally reached the half obliterated road on the far side of the valley, that once gave egress from the old mine to the region below. Searching out a secluded glade he unpacked and hobbled Jerry, tucked his rifle under one arm and then stole towards the mine.

THE night slowly grew lighter as he crawled along under the trees and thru underbrush. Coming out on a slight rise near the old mine he saw the edge of the moon peeping over the distant pine-topped ridge to the east. Hastily his eyes swept the side of Baldy Knob where the cabin stood. He hoped to catch the gleam of a light, which would serve in a measure to reassure him that all was well so far with those who dwelt there. But no light greeted his anxious eye. He could not make out the cabin, since that part of the old mountain still lay in silent shadow. A sudden sense of uneasiness possessed him. What did that lightless silence portend?

Slowly the moon rose in majestic beauty above the ridge, flooding that world of peak, pine, valley and canyon with a mellow, golden splendor. The soft, silent glory of the scene stilled for a moment the vague distrust that disturbed him and thrilled his soul with a nameless yearning, a strange longing old as the dream-visioned, throbbing heart of man, lifting him for the nonce up and beyond the sordid round of daily existence.

And then from somewhere on Baldy Knob with soul-snapping suddenness a sharp shot rang out, followed by a woman's wild scream, another shot, then abrupt and appalling silence. Instantly Barry came to earth, his heart jumping wildly. Clutching his rifle he bounded forward and downward thru sparse brush.

He had gone but a short distance when the portentious silence was shattered by a hair-raising, demoniacal scream that rose out of the earth directly in front of him. At the nerve-shattering cry Barry stopped with abrupt and amazed suddenness. From a clump of bushes he saw a long, lithe body rise. With a low gasping exclamation of desperation he leaped madly to one side to escape the spring of a great mountain lion. He struck a small bush, his rifle slipping from his grasp, the earth gave way from beneath him and he went hurtling down thru space amid a shower of dirt and small stones. With a breath-taking splash he landed in water and went under. He came up blowing and unhurt, but astonished beyond measure.

Treading water Barry attempted to take his bearings. Around him loomed high, black ragged walls. Something caught his eye to the left. He swam swiftly there. It was a long slender pole, far too fragile to bear his weight, reaching from beneath the water to the top of the wall above. Instantly he divined what it was—old Waitin' Peeley's measuring-rod, or water-gauge. By the moon's dimmed light he could see that the water had recently dropped quite a distance on the stick. He knew now that in jumping aside to avoid the leap of the great cat he had tumbled into the old mine where the cave-in had occurred.

Rapidly he glanced about for a way of extricating himself from his watery predicament, his mind suddenly filled with dark pictures of what was taking place on old Baldy Knob. He was helpless now, he realized, to avert whatever peril might be threatening the mountain girl. He railed grimly at his luck, then at the great cat which was to blame for his present position. Even as he did so he heard the lurking beast's soul-withering cry sound out above him. He shuddered at its weirdness. He was thankful, anyhow, the creature had not fallen in with him. The idea was far from a pleasant one to contemplate.

AFTER a bit the moon's rays lighted an opening ahead. He swam rapidly towards it and found it to be a large tunnel of the old mine. Hastily he drew himself up into it. The floor, tho now free of water, was damp and muddy, showing that only very recently had the water receded. As he rose to his feet he glanced up at the wall from which he had fallen. Silhouetted against the moon he saw the great cat stalking uneasily back and forth on the brink. Once again it uttered its blood-curdling cry.

Thankful for his lucky escape, Barry took new heart, feeling certain now that he could soon make his way to the outside in safety. How he wished for a light! He knew that the matches in his waterproof safe were all right, but he desired something that would make a larger and more continuous illumination. The rays of the moon lighted the high-vaulted passageway dimly and only for a short distance.

Glancing about, his heart gave a little bound of joy when he caught sight of a miner's candlestick stuck in the wall near him. Just beyond it he noticed a rusty pick. Hoping against hope that the candlestick might still hold a bit of candle, he grabbed it hastily from its place, but it held nothing. Sorely disappointed, he decided to get his matches in readiness and light them as occasion demanded. He began fishing for his matchsafe in his dripping garments. As his fingers closed on the metal the cat on the cliff gave another of its demoniacal cries.

The next moment Barry's heart stood still. From the black opening in front of him came a wild hair-raising wail that echoed and re-echoed in that dark cavern like the wail of the damned. Two menacing points of fire pierced the gloom. For one awful moment Barry gave himself up as lost and a vision of his mangled body confronted him as he realized that the great cat's furious, hunger-mad mate faced him there in the tunnel. Likely it had gotten in there the same way as had he, he reflected; that was why the other one constantly prowled along the rim of the cave-in.

Face to face with a frenzied mountain lion, in a dark tunnel of a deserted mine, is not a pleasant predicament to contemplate, even by one who has never been thru such an experience. It looks as if our hero has some very exciting moments ahead of him. He has. The concluding part of this story is thrilling to an extreme. Don't miss it.

Petticoats and Plowhandles

(Continued From Page 13)

steers for the last five years," declared the old man. "These are likely looking calves."

"What for? You won't use them. I've heard you say myself that you never could stand it to work with steers, they were too slow. What's the use of raising things you'll never use?"

"I allus wanted to raise a pair o' steers," persisted the old farmer.

But the calves went, and that at a time when they brought the top price. The scrub stock was replaced by two good Holstein cows whose milk was far in excess of what the three nondescript animals had yielded.

"We'll send our stuff to Camden by Jed Plummer," declared Alice. "But next year we'll have a motor truck of our own."

Not the least of her results was the change in the bearing of her husband. His habits of indolence and fatalistic ease had disappeared. He worked with abundant energy from morning to night. The old man protested and grumbled, but secretly proud of the "cal'lations" of his daughter-in-law, ably seconded Alvah's efforts. The farm began to look prosperous. Fields of waving oats nodded in the sun. The "south field" was plowed up. This, the "hoodoo piece" on the farm, the old man regarded with suspicion.

"'Twas there that my sweet-corn went all to smash," he reminded her. "Seems 's if that piece got every early frost that ever come."

"Pa, you always had first-rate luck with beans," Alvah reminded him. "Why don't you plant it with that, instead of fussing with sweet-corn? With beans six or seven dollars a bushel, they'd be worth something."

"Pretty late for beans," the old man counseled. Yet, in a week's time stocky leaves were coming out of the ground, and mid-summer showed a field in which great green plants ran riot.

It wasn't all smooth sailing, however. A late frost, one that the oldest inhabitant couldn't remember occurring so late in June, nipped a goodly section of the l ans. Joshua chuckled openly. "Told ye so," he cackled from behind curling clouds of smoke. Bugs were never so plentiful. It was against the indignant protests of both senior and junior Simmons that the girl hired the services of a power spraying outfit and gave the orchard a thoro treatment. "Ye'll ruin them trees," Joshua protested. It was not till Alice reminded him in emphatic terms of their agreement that he submitted.

It was on rainy days that the new manager found her hardest work cut out for her. On such days the old man had been wont to sit with uptilted feet braced against the woodbox, where he exhaled great clouds of smoke, or drowsed noisily. Later in the day he would plod up the road to the village store, where he would sit around and exchange bits of village gossip with keen relish.

Alvah would shoulder a long pole and go over to the mill-pond, where he would tramp the shores half the day in search of pickerel. At first his wife made no objection to his trips, as the string of lantern-jawed pike formed an acceptable addition to the family diet. But later she began to voice her disapproval.

"Why don't you do some of these odd jobs on these lowery days?" she asked. "You both spent all day Thursday fixing the fence in the corner pasture, when you could have been haying just as well as not."

"But if we hadn't fixed the fence, the cattle would have got out into Jed Perkin's garden," Alvah argued. "Then there would have been all kinds o' trouble."

"But you knew all the spring that that fence was going to pieces," his wife maintained. "You could have fixed it just as well during one of these lowery days. There are dozens of little jobs like that around the place that need to be done. Why not fix that hollow in the road down in the lower field where your hayrack always has trouble? And the barn cellar is half full of dressing that isn't doing any good lying there. Why not haul it out round the apple trees, or spread it over the upper field?"

IT TOOK a herculean amount of effort to keep Alvah and his father at work on rainy days. The two men, accustomed to loafing around the house or barn in rainy weather, or foregathering at the village store, yielded with difficulty and ungracefully to the new demands. "'Tain't fittin' weather for a dog to be out in," protested Joshua. But in spite of his protests they hauled out load after load of black deeply rotted manure to the orchard, and worked it round the boles of the trees. "Some o' that dressin' ain't been teched fur more'n ten year," Joshua admitted. Under the stimulus of energy and example the rest was put on the hayfields and as spare time permitted, plowed in.

The corner-store forum, primed by Joshua, at first regarded the management of the farm by the two women as a huge joke. Infinite and ponderous were the jests cracked at the two men's expense.

"Wa'al," drawled old Ben Dyer, punctuating his comments with unerring shots at the saw-dust box, "I hear ye've got a great combination out yer way, Joshua. Petticoats an' plow-handles, eh? Makes a fine team, eh?" He guffawed loudly thru his tobacco-stained whiskers and slapped his knee in uproarious mirth. "Petticoats an' plow-handles! That's a good one!"

At first Alvah and Joshua laughed with the jokers. Later, however, the point of the jest began to pall, and the two men felt that the circle around the saw-dust box was laughing at them, instead of with them. Partly for this reason, partly because the growing farm demands took more and more of their time, their visits to the grocery on rainy days, except for brief trips for real necessities, became more and more infrequent.

Against the protests of both men, Alice insisted on their setting out a quarter of an acre of strawberries and an eighth of an acre of raspberries.

"Strawberries are durned hard things

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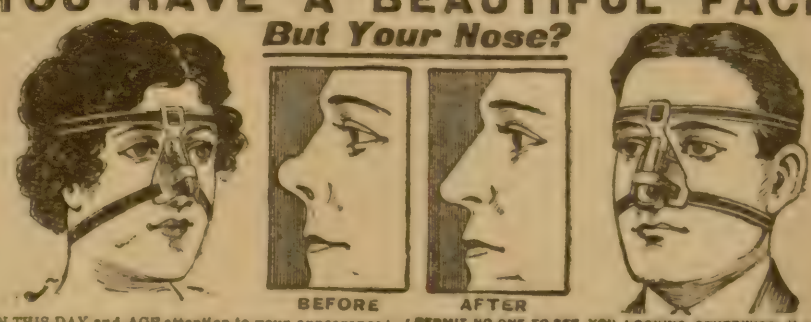

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to take keer of," protested her father-in-law. "Onct ye let the weeds get into 'em, an' ye're done."

"But we'll keep the weeds out," she told him. "It's going to be hard work, but we need the money. Didn't you tell me this summer that Zeke Carter cleaned up almost $500 from an eighth of an acre of strawberries—and that right at his door, too?"

Alvah objected to the raspberries. "Prickly, running things that's hard to handle," he told her. "They spread and tangle all over creation."

"But they sell for thirty-five and forty cents a half pint in the cities," she reminded him. "Aren't you willing to do a little disagreeable work for the money?"

He flushed and strode off to his work in the lower field.

Winter had been a time of leisure around the farm, broken into by the heavy and disagreeable tasks of cutting wood and hauling ice. Alice allowed them plenty of time for this, but Alvah sprang to the fore in this heavy labor. Stimulated by the idea of showing his wife what he could do, he drove himself and his father like the proverbial beavers so that in a few weeks a pile of wood such as never before had been seen at the old farmhouse filled the yard.

During the winter the old buildings took on a new appearance. Sagging steps were righted up; the weak spots in the flooring of the barn were replaced with sound new planking; the henpen was treated to new roosts and a thoro coat of whitewash, while new nests were provided for the biddies. The leaky sinkspout with its generations of rotting filth was torn away, and a new one put into place. There seemed to be no end to the task of rejuvenating the old place.

During the long evenings Alice pored over the volumes on agriculture as well as Government and State bulletins and pamphlets. Alvah, at first openly scoffing, became interested in spite of himself, then an ardent convert, longing for summer to come to put his new theories into practice. Even Josuha, won over at times against himself, admitted that there might be something in it, after all.

Ma Simmons said little, but with newborn energy and happiness began her self-appointed task of building up the poultry yard, her especial care.

SPRING found the Simmons farm taking on a new appearance. It seemed as if the very roses in the dooryard and the green lawn smiled, while the lilac hedge was fairly bursting with blooms of overpowering fragrance. The farm wore an air of prosperity it had not possessed for many a day. Acres of fertile, rich-smelling soil lay overturned ready for planting. The apple trees were one fragrant mass of pinkish blossoms indescribably sweet, and suggestive in their possibilities. Best of all, the farmers seemed to wear a rejuvenated air, a glory in the farm and its possibilities and the satisfaction of accomplishment and promise.

It was on a rainy day in late June when Alice Simmons stopped her family as they were about to rise from the breakfast table.

"It's been a year from the time Mother and I took charge," she reminded them. "And it's time that, like all good managers, we gave an account of our stewardship."

The two men leaned back with an air of expectancy. "Well, how much in debt are we at this time o' year?" Alvah asked her, as he watched her prettily flushed face.

"Before I give you any figures, would you be willing to go back to the old way of doing things?" she asked.

"Guess not!" her husband replied promptly, and even Joshua shook his head. It was a vigorous and emphatic shake.

"You've worked fairly hard, I know, but you've gained fifteen pounds, Alvah, and father hasn't been so well in years, has he?" she demanded.

"Never felt better in my life," the old man admitted. "But how well off are we?"

"I've fed you all right, haven't I, and you've had all the tobacco that is good for you, haven't you, Pa?" she insisted.

Again the admission, tho grudging, was unqualified.

"You've done well, Alice," Joshua agreed. "I know ye may have run purty deep inter debt, but we've allus been behind the game every spring, an' I dunno's ye've done wuss'n we useter."

"You've managed well, Alice," her husband agreed. "And if you've run behind a little, I doubt if I could have done better myself."

"Well, folks," the triumphant "genenal manager" announced, "we haven't 'gone in the hole,' as you think, but we've paid all the bills; we have almost $50 ahead; there's between $800 and $1,000 worth of strawberries ready to be picked; nearly as many raspberries; the apple trees never were so heavily loaded; and you've the largest and best-looking crops on the farm for years—the very best around here. If everything goes well this summer, we can buy that motor truck this fall—and put in that gasoline engine, and maybe running water besides."

"And don't forget that I have nearly 150 Rhode Island Red pullets all ready to lay," added Ma Simmons, with a gratified smile on her plump face.

There were gasps of astonishment from the two menfolks.

"Haowon airth did ye ever do it?" queried Joshua. "We ain't seemed to work much harder'n I useter. The farm seems to be in apple-pie order, an' I feel like doin' a man's work—same's I useter twenty year ago."

"How did I do it?" asked the girl. "Well, by using a little headwork, that's all. You always had these possibilities here, but you never used them—never applied business methods to farming, but just went ahead and guessed at it.

"How did I do it? You planted things that would turn in ready money, and cut out the wastes and leaks. We didn't have to buy half the corn we used to, after disposing of those useless horses and some of that young stock. We finished the year with hay in the barn instead of buying it in the spring. The profits from those beans and other crops paid most of our bills—even if I did buy all those strawberry plants and raspberry bushes. We got a big price for apples last fall, and they yielded heavily and of good quality—due to the working and spraying you gave them.

"The new cows gave twice as much butter as those old scrubs used to give, and didn't cost any more to keep. We've built up a flock of hens that will lay. Your orchard is an orchard now, and not a collection of all sorts of trees. And I hope you won't mind if I say I've built up a real spirit of wanting to do something in you folks."

Alvah said nothing, but came over and kissed her. Ma Simmons came up to her daughter-in-law, with tears in her eyes, and laid an ample hand on the girl's shoulder. Even old Joshua, unused to emotion, wrung her hand with his gnarled old one, and patted her on the back.

The two old people went out into the kitchen, volubly happy. Alvah stayed a moment, his arm round his young wife's waist.

"Well, was the experiment a success, Alvah?" she queried, with an arch upglance.

"You bet it was!" He kissed her heartily. "And the farm's going right on under your charge."

"No, it isn't." She looked up tenderly at him, and then placed her rosy mouth very close to his ear.

"I may have been a successful business manager, but the most successful thing I've done is training you to take charge. You're an altogether different sort of farmer, man o' mine. And Alvah"—her voice was a whisper—"I've shown that I can raise crops and stock and hens. But don't you think there's something more important to raise than those—something nicer and finer and dearer—and, Alvah, I want to do that."

Alvah Simmons bent low and kissed his girl-wife's glowing averted face. Her eyes shone like stars, and she turned and looked shyly up at him. In his own eyes was a great light of gladness.

"There's nothing that can quite equal that," he agreed.

The Looting of the Limited

(Continued From Page 6)

room, finally arrayed himself. His own shirt, collar and tie he used. They were soiled, and clean ones he knew were to be found in the bureau drawer, but he deemed the risk too great to effect the change. His hair was short and did not greatly miss the use of a comb. Except for the matter of shoes he was dressed.

Two minutes later the little man, the shoes in one hand, left the house by way of the bedroom window. Thru the yard and up the lane the length of a city block he hobbled in his stocking feet before venturing to stop and put them on. This was not accomplished without pain, for tho the swelling in the little man's ankle had gone down and left it normal, yet it was still far from strong. And the shoes didn't exactly fit, either.

But there was small use in repining; nor waiting for the ankle to grow stronger. Already in the east was to be seen the first faint lines of approaching day. If the little man cared for his liberty he had better be moving. With a groan of anguish he rose to his feet and hobbled slowly down the path. He had no notion where the path was leading him, but that could easily be remedied when daylight came. Just now the thing to do was to increase as much as possible the distance between himself and the house he had quitted. Unconsciously, at thought of what might be his fate if captured, he quickened his step.

The little man reached the end of the lane, and started up the main road. He breathed a sigh of relief. It was smoother traveling here and to his gratification he found his ankle giving him less trouble. He hobbled along quite easily now. Somewhat later he paused to roll himself a cigarette. Up to now his perturbation had been so great that he had forgotten his need for a smoke. He laughed when he thought of it.

BY NOON he had traveled five miles, and tho tired, his spirits had risen amazingly. He summoned the courage to apply to a wayside hovel for food. The man of the house eyed him askance, he thought, but the sight of a dollar bill secured him ready admittance.

"We don't run no hotel," said the fellow. "And we don't serve anything fancy, but there's plenty of what we have got, and if you're hungry——"

The little man made haste to admit that he was, and during the next fifteen minutes he proved the statement to the entire satisfaction of his host, his host's wife, and his host's three tow-headed children.

Once more the little man was hobbling upon his way. The lame ankle was paining atrociously again, and he felt ready to drop with weariness, but still he pressed onward. Great ominous black clouds were piling up from the south, and the distant roll of heavy thunder urged him to still greater effort. A fifteen-minute rainfall would transform the level, dusty bottom road into a sea of stickiness.

"I just have to make it," said the little man desperately to himself. "Ah!" He rounded a corner in the road and decried in the distance a grocery store, A small one, to be sure, but perhaps it contained a telephone!

This proved to be the case, and very shortly the little man, seated on a stool, and with a receiver to his ear, was transmitting over sensitive wires an urgent message to a taxi firm in Plattsburg.

"Send me down a car right away," he shouted for the benefit of several loungers who seemed more than anxious to hear what he had to say. "I'm a detective, working on this Limited hold-up job. I sprained my ankle a little while back and can't walk. Hurry up with the car. It's going to rain."

The little man hung up the receiver and smiled genially about him. "Care if I take off my shoe?" he asked the proprietor. "It hurts like sixty."

The proprietor also smiled genially. It was not often that he came into contact with a real detective—come to think of it, this was the first time in his life he had ever seen one to know him.

"Sure," he answered heartily. "Sure thing. Take 'em both off if you want to. Here." He handed the little man the morning paper. "Maybe you can get some pointers on the case. I see where they took the long stringy guy to the asylum. He was crazy as a—what's the matter now?"

With an effort the little man controlled himself. "My blasted foot," he explained. Eagerly he perused the sheet. Finally he looked up. "I wish he'd been killed," he said vindictively. "He's a bad one."

"The storekeeper nodded a vigorous assent. "I think so, too," he answered.

"He's a dirty coward to boot," said the little man.

Again the storekeeper agreed. "What became of that guy who tried to rescue the things I wonder?" he asked.

"Killed, I guess. He's another——"

He did not finish his statement. Something in his host's look warned him to caution.

"I been working on this case down here in the jungle since yesterday morning and haven't had time to see a paper," he finished lamely. "What about it?"

For answer his host handed him the evening paper of the previous day. "Read that column," he said.

The little man did so. With growing wonder he read of the return of the loot, Mr. Taylor's note that accompanied the bag, then skipping to another column, he read a rehash of the entire case as known up to that time. "Wouldn't that jar you; wouldn't that jar you?" he said to himself over and over. Aloud he said:

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"What you mean?" inquired the storekeeper.

"Mean!" The little man seemed suddenly very angry about something. "Mean!" he nearly shouted. "Why, he turned in all the stuff but the diamonds, didn't he?"

"Yes," said the storekeeper. "But maybe——"

"Maybe nothing," snorted the "detective" derisively. "He sent in the rest of the stuff for a blind; that's what he did, and kept the diamonds. And I'm the man that's going to——"

JUST then a taxi cab dashed up to the entrance of the store. The little man with many a pang pulled on the ill-fitting shoe, bought himself and the proprietor a cigar each, shook hands with and thanked him effusively for his kindness, then hobbled out of the store. The next moment he was examining with critical care the ragged looking casing of a left rear wheel.

"Reckon it'll hold up, sonny?" he inquired, dubiously, of the driver.

The driver spat his contempt. "Sure," he answered with the reckless assurance of a born taxi driver. "Sure Mike! That there tire's good for——"

It wasn't. It wasn't good for even a fraction of the distance the driver claimed for it. Half way between the little grocery and the thriving city of Plattsburg, the tire exploded with a report like unto that of an overloaded shotgun.

"Ain't it hell?" the driver inquired of his passenger, shutting off the power barely in time to escape a catastrophe.

The little man did not answer immediately. Just at that moment he was past caring for trifles. He was feverishly searching for the third time all the pockets his clothes boasted. Then he gave it up.

"It's gone," he said finally. "Gone. I remember everything else; matches, tobacco, watch—but I must have left that in my vest pocket." Very quietly he sat a moment, too full of disgust and disappointment even to swear. Then, "Ain't it hell?" he observed explosively.

The driver, on his knees in the dusty road, sweating and tugging at the wheel, heard him.

"It sure is, mister," he agreed heartily. "And it'll be worse'n that if it starts to rain. Come down here, won't you, and lend a hand."

Taxi drivers are hard fellows to beat. "Money talks" with them, and if it is not readily forthcoming—well, in that case, a policeman, or the judge, is likely to do some talking. The mysterious little man will have to employ his keenest wits if he gives this particular taxi pilot the slip. Then, too, there are detectives to be reckoned with. Will the little man wriggle out of the predicament in which the author leaves him? Don't miss the next installment. It is full of thrills.

The Last Installment of

The Albert Gate Enigma

By Louis Tracy

BRETT laid on the table the belt taken from Dubois, and lifted out its precious contents with careful exactness. The men crowded around. Even amidst the exciting events of the hour, the sight of the fateful stones which had caused so much turmoil and bloodshed could not fail to be deeply interesting.

Predominant among them was the Imperial diamond, luminous, gigantic, awesome in its potentialities. Its size and known value rendered it one of the most remarkable objects in the world, while even in its present unfinished state the facets already cut by the workmen gave evidence to its brilliant purity.

Pulling himself together by an effort, Talbot advanced to the table and slowly counted the stones. There were fifty-one all told, and even the smallest of the collection was a diamond of great value.

"Yes," he said, "that is the correct number. I cannot be certain, but I believe they are the originals. The big one certainly is. It will be one of the happiest days of my life when I see the last of them."

"That day will arrive soon," remarked Brett quietly. "You and I, Mr. Winter, must sail on the Blue-Bell tonight for Marseilles. That is, if Mr. Daubeney is agreeable," he added, turning to that worthy gentleman, whose face was a trifle paler than it had been for years.

"I am at your service, gentlemen," he announced promptly.

"But what about Fairholme and the young lady?" he went on, turning to Sir Hubert.

"I think I understand," replied the baronet. "Mr. Brett means that these wretched diamonds should pass officially out of the control of the British Government as early as possible."

The barrister nodded.

"That being so, no time should be lost. Edith, should all go well, will be compelled in any event to remain here for several days before she can be removed. You, Jack, and you, Mr. Brett, should you so desire, can easily return here from London, after having fulfilled the trust reposed in you."

"Then I only make one stipulation," put in Daubeney quickly. "The Blue-Bell will remain in Marseilles and bring you back."

His eagerness evoked a quiet smile all round, and it was generally agreed that this program should be followed. In the brief discussion which ensued, Mr. Winter explained his earlier movements. The detectives attached to the British Embassy in Paris told him of Dubois' journey to Marseilles.

Learning that Brett was staying at the Louvre Hotel, he went straight there on his arrival, only to learn that the barrister and some friends had quitted Marseilles that day on a private yacht bound for Palermo. The local police filled in some of the details, but chance did the rest.

Going to the P. and O. office to book his passage to Messina on the Ganges, he heard of Big Jean and the Turks, and then knew that he was on the right scent.

There was a touching meeting between Edith and the others that evening. She was naturally pale and weak, but her buoyant spirit triumphed over physical defects, and she made light of her injuries. Even Fairholme was restored to a state of sanity by his brief visit, a fact that was evidenced by his quiet enjoyment of a cigar when he walked down to the quay to witness the departure of the Blue-Bell.

Before leaving Palermo Brett had another interview with the chief of police, the result being that unobtrusive but effective means were taken to safeguard the different members of the gang which had caused so much personal suffering and diplomatic uneasiness.

The reception of the party in London may be detailed in a sentence. The Turkish Ambassador was specially instructed from Constantinople to take charge of the diamonds, and Talbot had the keen satisfaction of personally handing them over to the Sultan's representative, in the presence of his chief at the Foreign Office. The unlucky gems were forthwith taken back to their owner, and no doubt repose at this moment in a special reliquary, together with other mementoes of the Prophet, for the project which led to their visit to London was definitely abandoned.

Meanwhile daily telegrams from Palermo assured Talbot and Brett as to the continued progress of the fair sufferer, who had so nearly sacrificed her life in her devoted championship of her brother's cause.

At last a day came when the Blue-Bell again steamed into the harbor of Palermo, and the manner in which Fairholme shouted when he caught sight of Daubeney standing on the bridge was in itself sufficient indication that all had gone well during their absence.

The travelers were surprised and delighted to find Edith herself seated in a carriage with her uncle on the wharf. Were it not that she was pale, and her right arm was tightly strapped across her breast to prevent any movement of the injured shoulder, no one could have guessed that she had recently undergone such a terrible experience.

But Brett, delighted as he was to meet his friends again under such pleasant conditions, experienced the keenest sentiments of triumphant elation when he entered the apartment where Dubois was still confined under the watchful guard of two detectives.

Talbot accompanied him. The young Englishman had by this time quite forgiven his enemy. He felt that he was more than quits with him. Indeed, he was the first to speak when they came together.

"I am sorry to see it is your turn to be trussed up in bed, Dubois," he said. "How are you feeling now? Getting along all right, I hope."

The Frenchman did not answer him directly. A faint smile illumined his pale face. He turned to Brett with a nonchalant question:

"Mr. Brett, have you any influence with those two worthy Italian doctors?"

"Perhaps," said the barrister. "What is it you want?"

"I want a cigarette. They won't let me smoke. Surely to goodness, a cigarette won't hurt my arm."

THE barrister turned a questioning glance towards the male nurse in charge of the patient, but the man did not understand what had been said. Brett, who spoke no Italian, indicated by pantomime what it was the Frenchman required, and the attendant signified his sentiments in silent eloquence—he turned and looked out of the window. So Dubois enjoyed his cigarette in peace. He gave a sigh of great contentment, and then said, lazily:

"Now, ask me anything you like. I am ready."

"There is only one point concerning which I am really at fault," began Brett. "How did your Turkish associates manage to murder Mehemet Ali and his secretaries so quietly?"

"Oh, that was easy enough," declared the Frenchman. "You understand I was in no way responsible for the bloodletting, and indeed strongly disapproved of it."

"Yes," replied the barrister. "I believe that."

"Well, the rest of the business was simplicity itself. Hussein—the Envoy's confidential servant—was in our pay. It was, of course, absolutely necessary to have an accomplice in the house, and his price was a small one—£500, I think. The credentials we brought, which you, Mr. Talbot, examined, were not forgeries."

"How can that be?" cried Jack. "The Sultan would never be a party to a plot for his own undoing."

"Don't ask me for explanations I cannot give," responded Dubois coolly. "The exact facts of this story can only be ascertained at Yildiz Kiosk, and I do not suppose that any one there will ever tell you. No doubt you saw for yourself that Mehemet Ali was convinced. Were it not for you, he would have given up control that night. But you and your policemen, and your confounded English notions of right and wrong, rendered necessary the adoption of the second part of the plan we had decided on, in case the first miscarried. After I left he house with you, Hussein brought in more coffee. That which he and my Turkish friends drank was all right. The beverage given to Mehemet Ali and his secretaries was drugged."

"Ah!" interrupted Brett, "that explains everything. But why was Hussein killed?"

"That is another matter, which only a Turk can understand. These fellows believe in the knife or a piece of whipcord as ending unpleasant difficulties most effectually. You see they were not ordinary rogues. They pretended to be conspirators actuated by pure political

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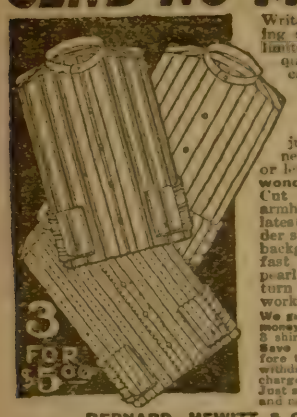

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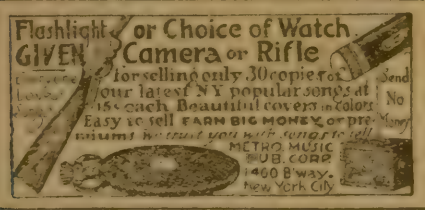
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motives—motives which a common servant like Hussein could not really be expected to appreciate. So to close his mouth thoroly they stabbed him while he was taking some loose cash from his master's pockets. Then it occurred to them that when Mehemet Ali and the others recovered from the effects of the drug, they also would be able to throw an unpleasantly strong light on the complicity of certain high personages in Constantinople. This was sufficient reason for the adoption of strong measures, so they also were peacefully dispatched."

"But where did the knife come from?" pursued Brett. "It was not in their possession when they entered, nor when they left."

"No; of course not. Hussein brought it himself, to be used in case of necessity. He also brought the pliers which cut the wire blinds, and the material used for concealing the broken strands subsequently. Hussein was really an excellent confederate, and I was furious when I heard that he was dead. You know how the diamonds were abstracted from the house?"

"Yes," said Brett. "They were made up into a parcel and flung thru the window into the park. The knife and the pliers accompanied them, I suppose?"

"The third Turk—the gentleman who pulled you down on to the bed so unceremoniously, Mr. Talbot—was waiting there for the packet. But he had to hide in the park all the night, until the gates were opened in the morning. It was a ticklish business right thru. I did not know at what hour the police might discover the extent of the crime. The diamonds did not reach me until 7 o'clock. And then I had some difficulty in persuading the Turks to give them up to me. You see, I had my own little plan, too, which these excellent gentlemen never suspected, as they already had paid me £5,000 for my help. But the real heads of the party were in Paris—Hussein-ul-Mulk and that gang, you know—and by representing the danger to their cause which would result from any attempt on the part of the Turks in London to reach France, they were at last persuaded.

"By 9 o'clock that morning I got them safely off to the docks, where they boarded a vessel bound for Smyrna. Their passages were already booked in Armenian names. Big Jean, who had no connection with the affair personally, stayed at a little hotel in Soho in order to report all clear during the next few days. He happened by chance to travel with you and the other man. It was a clever scheme, I assure you, from beginning to end. By the way, may I trouble you for another cigarette?"

"These are not equal to Hussein-ul-Mulk's," said Brett, producing his case. "No, he has an exquisite taste in tobacco. But I nearly fooled him with the dummy diamonds. I would have done so if it had not been for you. Do you know, Mr. Brett, I have always underrated Englishmen's brains. You are really stupid as a nation"—here Talbot almost blushed—"but you are an exception. You ought to be a Frenchman."

"I suppose I may regard that as a compliment?" remarked Brett casually.

"Take it as you like," said Dubois. "And now that I have told you all that you want to know, I suppose, may I ask you a question of some interest to myself? What is to become of me? Am I to be hanged, or imprisoned, or passed on to the Sultan for treatment?"

Brett was silent for a few moments. He had fully discussed Dubois' connection with the British authorities.

"How much of the £5,000 given you by the Turks remains in your possession?" he demanded.

The Frenchman hesitated before replying.

"There is no use lieing to you. I have not yet expended the first thousand, altho I had to pay pretty dearly for a good many things."

AGAIN there was silence.

"Why did you come here?" asked the barrister.

"Because I would be safe for some months with a few hospitable gentlemen whom I know up in the hills there." He nodded towards the window, thru which they could see the blue crests of the distant mountains.

"And then?"

"Then Marguerite and I were going to the Argentine, to dwell in rural felicity, and teach our children to bless the name of Mahomet and Abdul Hamid."

"Marguerite is Mademoiselle Beaucaire?"

"Yes, poor girl! I hear she is ill and in prison, together with her excellent father. Really, Mr. Brett, I cannot help liking you, but I ought to be anxious to cut your throat."

"In that case you would certainly be hanged. Are you married to Mademoiselle Beaucaire?"

The Frenchman darted a quick and angry look at his inquisitor.

"What has that to do with you?" he snarled.

Dubois' future had already been determined. The rascal was more fortunate than he deserved to be. Owing to the lucky chance that his crime had a political significance he would escape punishment. By no known form of European law could he be brought to trial on any charge and at the same time gagged in his defense. The slightest public reference to either the theft of the diamonds or the Sultan's original intentions with regard to them would create such a storm in the Mohammedan world that no man could prophecy the end.

Half unconsciously, tho he had a glimmering perception of the truth, Henri Dubois was saved by the magnitude of the interests involved.

Brett knew exactly how to deal with him. But a fantastic project had arisen in his mind, and he determined to graft it upon the drastic expedient adopted by the authorities. He abruptly broke off the conversation and told the Frenchman that he would call again during the afternoon.

True to his promise, Talbot and he visited the injured man some hours later. This time they were accompanied by a stout individual and a closely-veiled lady—Big Jean and his daughter.

The meeting between Henri and Marguerite was pathetic. It was at the same time exceedingly French, and somewhat trying to the nerves of the Englishmen.

At last the couple calmed their transports, and Brett promptly recalled them to a sense of their surroundings by reminding them that there was serious business to be discussed.

"I am commissioned to inform you," he said, addressing Dubois, "that if you proceed direct to the Argentine, never attempt to revisit France, and keep your mouth closed as to your attempt to purloin the Sultan's jewels, you will be set at liberty here, and no effort will be made by the French or English police to arrest you. The infringement of any of these conditions will lead to your extradition and a sentence of penal servitude for life."

"My word!" cried the Frenchman, looking intently into the barrister's inscrutable face. "Why such tenderness?"

Brett would not give him time for prolonged reflection.

"I have not yet finished," he said drily. "I imagine that Mademoiselle Beaucaire cannot produce a marriage certificate. She will be supplied with one, to permit her to travel with you as your lawful wife."

The pair was startled. They somewhat relaxed the close embrace in which they sat. The man's handsome face flushed with anger. The woman became a shade paler and looked from the barrister to her lover.

"Good," growled Big Jean. "Quite right!"

"We can manage our own affairs," began Dubois savagely; but Brett again took up the parable.

"You owe this lady a deep debt of gratitude for her unswerving devotion to you. She has helped you to lead an evil life; let her now assist you in a better career. You have your chance. Will you take it?"

The Woman Sharpshooter sat mute and downcast. This personal development came as a complete surprise to her. Pride would not permit her to plead her own cause. Dubois glanced at her covertly. He was still annoyed and defiant; but even he—hardened scoundrel and cynic tho he was—could not find words to contest Brett's decision.

The barrister deemed the moment ripe for his final smashing argument. He came somewhat nearer to the bed, and said with exasperating coolness:

"There is a secret room in the Black Cafe, the contents of which have not yet been too closely examined by the police. It is in their charge. At my request, backed up by the British Foreign Office, they have thus far deferred a detailed scrutiny. Perhaps if the external influence is removed they may press their investigations to a point when it will be impossible to permit your contemplated voyage to the Argentine. You know best. I have nothing further to say."

Dubois looked at him in moody silence. The Argentine—with £4,000? Yes. But a wife!

Suddenly all eyes were attracted to Big Jean, who emitted a gasping groan. His fat cheeks were livid, and huge drops of perspiration stood on his brow. Feeling that the others were regarding him intently, he made a desperate effort to recover his composure.

"It is nothing!" he gurgled. "The English gentleman's proposal with regard to my daughter interested me, that is all."

Dubois and the innkeeper gazed intently into each other's eyes for a few trying seconds. Then the Frenchman drew Marguerite closer to him, with his uninjured arm, and said:

"Let us get married, my little one. It is essential."

And married they were forthwith, a priest and an official from the Mayor's office being in waiting at the hotel. While they were signing the register Big Jean motioned Brett to one side.

"Allow me to thank you, M'sieu', for the kindness you have shown," he murmured. "Touching that hidden room in the Cabaret, now. Do the police really know of it? You were not joking?"

"Not in the least."

"Then, M'sieu', I accompany them to the Argentine," and he jerked his thumb toward Dubois and his wife. "Paris is no place for me."

Soon after the ceremony Mme. Dubois

(Concluded on Page 20.)

A Peep Into the Editor's Mailbag.

(Concluded From Page 2.)

to you, if you think it is O. K. Will send the other if you publish it, have been a reader for a long time, and take the pleasure also of saying I would not miss my weekly copy of the Ledger for anything.

My spelling is rather poor owing to my being in a hurry, and my writing worse. Will have the next weeks part of my story written better.

So Au' Revoir

hoping you can manage to read this and my manuscript, I remain "yours in hope"

T. B. S. G.

Willing to Have Story Appear on Any Page.

Mr. W. D. Boyce, Co,
Chicago,
Dear Sirs:
Am writing short story for Childrens Page or any other place you can use it.
Yours Respectively,
M. R.

Our Young Lady Assistant Indignantly Says She Knows Nothing About Padding!

Dear Editor:—
Inclose is a Ms., of which may need some little padding. if it is available will you please have your assistant fix it up, and hold your pay out of the price of same, as I am willing to except a small sum for it. inclose find stamp for return postage.

Ever Yours
MRS. O. I.

But There Ain't No Such Animal as Inspiration!

Gentlemen:
I have the pleasure of submitting to you a story written by myself during a few moments of inspiration.
Hoping it will meet with your approval for publishment I am,
Yours truly,
J. B.

Says Contribution Is a Masterpiece.

Dear Editor.
Are you short on copy? Consider the little sketch I sending you. It's a masterpiece. However if should not think so return it my expense. If you wish may offer me a job on your staff.
Respectfully Yours,
M. C.

Hasn't Space to Mention the Third Story.

To Editors of Chicago Ledger,
Chicago, Ill.
Dear Sirs—
I would like very much to know if you by short stories for the Ledger paper. I thought perhaps you had regular writters who wrote stories for each week. I write short stories and would like to sell them. I also write poetry some.
The names of the stories I have completed are—"The Forgotton Castle," "Love on the Mountain Top," and another one that I have not space to mention here.
My first story is about a rock Castle in the ocean. I am writing on one now with the title of, "In the shadow of the Pine."
If you wish to examine some of my stories I will send some upon request. Hoping to receive a favorable reply I remain,
Respectively yours,
G. M. I.

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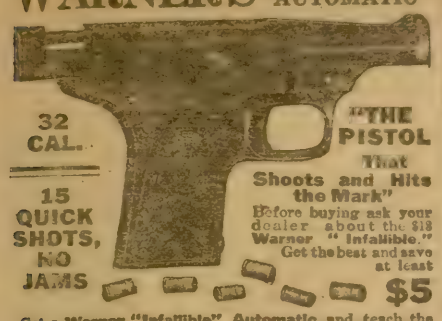

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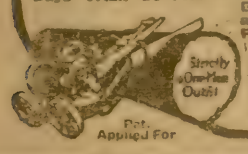

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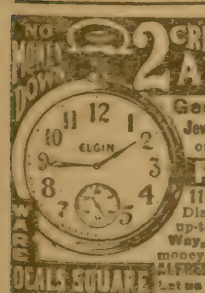

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The Dumbfounding of Mrs. McGoon

BY MARY L. OWEN.

THE Widow McGoon looked out of her second-story window and saw Jefferson Capron coming up the walk. She was not displeased, altho it was 11 of the clock on Monday morning, for the washing, having been put to soak after church the night before, was on the line, the tubs were emptied on the asparagus bed, and her blue apron was replaced by a white one.

"I'll bet that fool has come to propose to me again," she said, over her shoulder, to Mattie, her niece, who was just finishing the dusting.

"Well, let him," she continued, after a pause, "but, I've said before and I'll say again, nobody gets a widower's possible interest in my property unless he can match me dollar for dollar and hog for hog. Hullo, Jeff."

"Hullo, yourself, Miz McGoon," was the greeting of a tall, angular man, as he lifted an anxious glance to the window. "Come down yere a minnit, will yeh? I got somethin' to ask yeh."

"Now, you, Jeff, what's the use to hender me?" inquired the widow, with a conscious air, followed by a smile rather more coy than usually expected of a solid lady of 175 pounds avoirdupois.

"'Taint what you think I'm goin' to ask. 'Taint at all," cried the anxious man. "No'm, 'taint at—ALL."

The widow's smile faded, but she answered civilly enough, "I'll be right down, but, remember, this is Monday, Jeff Capron."

"Yes'm, yes'm, I'll be brief, I will so," promised Jeff.

"You see, it's like this," he explained eagerly, when she appeared. "I've got a sort of a—well, you might say—compliment'ry way of talkin' to wimmen. You might have noticed it?"

"I have," replied Widow McGoon, dryly.

"Yes'm, I make no doubt you have. Two weeks ago, now, f'r instance, when we was a-comin' home from the box social, both of us so gay, I was talkin' kind o' tender like, wasn't I?"

"You asked me to have you," said Widow McGoon.

"Yes'm, I did, an' you, knowin' me as you do, throwed it off as a joke an'——"

"I told you I wouldn't consider a man with only sixty-five hogs to my hundred and sixty-five," interrupted Widow McGoon.

"So you did, so you did, meanin' it as final, an' I took it so, not intendin' to keep more'n two-three sows hereafter," cried Jefferson Capron, "but, looky here, Miz McGoon, what I'm been edgin' around to ask you is, you didn't take me up serious, did you, an' brag to the neighbors?"

"Brag!" Widow McGoon was afraid she had not made her tone contemptuous enough. "Brag!" she repeated.

"Well! you might of, careless like, I was fearful, but, shoh! I might of knowed you wouldn't. 'Taint counted mannerly to tell of sitch, an' I've always counted you a perfec' lady."

"What you drivin' at, Jeff Capron? Your talk is a plumb muddle and mystery," scolded Widow McGoon, scolding to keep from owning she had confided in a gossip or two.

"Well, it's like this——. Say, le's go in the house an' set, where we can talk easy."

"For pity's sake, go ahead and say what you came to say," demanded the exasperated widow, when Jeff was disposed on the edge of a chair in her living-room. "You make me as nervous as a witch, with your hummin' and hawin'."

"I ALWAYS did like old maids," said Jeff, slowly, as he studied the pattern of the rug.

"If that's what you came to say, you'd better talk to Mattie instead of me. She's gettin' on, tho not real old, yet. I'll call her."

"No, no," cried the alarmed ex-lover, "I don't mean her. You know Pete Wigram's sister, don't you, her that came to live at his house last fall?"

"Yes," answered the widow, shortly.

"Her an' me had quite a talk, last night, while she was doin' the supper dishes, after the rest of the folks had set out for church. I couldn't help but notice how handy she was with housework and how obligin', but that's the way with old maids, obligin' an' thankful for small favors. Young girls is so skittish an' ongrateful, as if the whole world was theirs by rights, an' widders is so uppish an' knowin', always seemin' to say to theirselves, 'I know the whole seck. I've had one an' can git another any time I'm a mind to.'"

"If that's all you've got to say——"

"Now, Carrie," went on Jeff, unmindful, "is diffrunt. When I told her I'd just as lieve take her to church as not, she blushed up as red as a piny an' said we'd be late an' she didn't like to go in late, but 'twas real kind of me to offer an' she was much obliged. She said it so kind o' sweet I was half a mind to tell her 'twasn't all I was thinkin' of offerin'."

"Pity you hadn't."

"No rush in this case required," opined Mr. Capron. "However, I am layin' off to take her ridin' in my flivver soon's I think the Wigrams has got their wash out. She's liable to blush agin, I reckon, before we git back home."

"It seems to me," remarked Widow McGoon, rising, "that the towels and tablecloths must be dry enough to fold down."

"Don't let me hender you," said Mr. Capron, springing to his feet with alacrity. "So long, Miz McGoon. I'll send you the first invite."

"I despise men," muttered Widow McGoon, as she heard his flivver clatter away.

As she was dabbing a wet finger against a flatiron, next morning, to test its heat, Jeff appeared at the kitchen window.

"I tried the front door and it was locked, so I come on round," he explained, without preliminary greeting. "I wanted to ask you not to name to friends what I said yeste'day. She's gone!"

"Gone?"

"Yes. While I was a-lingerin' an' a-loiterin' here, she was a-packin' her trunk to set out for Shanghai. She's got a chance to convert them folks over ther from worshipin' their ancestors, so Pete says."

"That ought to be an easy job. I never felt any call to worship mine," commented Widow McGoon.

"Me, neither. I was raised by the crabbedest old grandfather ever was. However, that's neither here nor there. The point is, she's set out f'r N'Yawk on a railroad train, but expects to go the rest o' the way by water. I thought for a minnit of overhaulin' her at N'Yawk, f'r her own good. In them heathen countries, Pete says, you live mostly on rice. Boiled rice with raisins in it lookin' like blood blisters ain't appetizin' lemme tell you. Gran'dad mostly raised me on that an' beans."

"You better be settin' out."

"Settin' out? Why, that's onpossible! It'd cost all of forty dollars for me to git to N'Yawk, an' eighty to fetch the two of us back. No, there's no help for it. I got to forgit her, but don't tell nothin'."

"I reckon you can do your forgettin' as well at home," said Widow McGoon, unsympathetically, "and it plegs me to try to iron with somebody lookin' on."

THAT night the widow was taken with what she classified as a "raging" toothache. For a whole week thereafter she sat with her feet in the kitchen oven by day, and lay on her bed with a hot brick under her poulticed, blistered and otherwise tortured jaw by night, leaving Mattie to scold the hired man and ward off inquiring friends.

On the morning of the eighth day, with the courage of desperation, she went to a dentist and had her red-hot enemy drawn.

With it safely tucked in her purse, she essayed a little shopping and, at lunch time, was back at her own gate with a beflowered new hat on her head and it of the battered plumes in a paper bag beside her.

Drawn up to one side was a car she recognized, piled high with boxes and bundles.

"What in creation is Jeff up to now?" she questioned aloud, as she hurried up the walk.

Mattie met her at the door, hugged her

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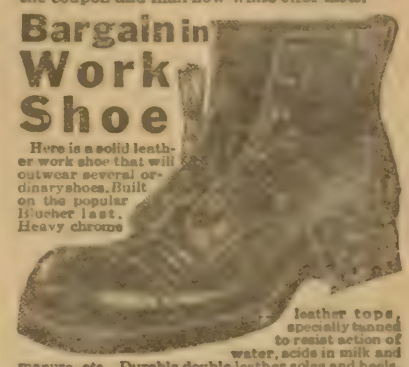

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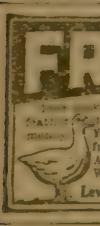

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and kissed her, with considerable intake, on her blistered cheek.

"Ouch! 'Smatter with you, anyway?" cried Widow McGoon, backing away.

"Jeff's in the parlor, with the license and minister and a couple of the Pinger girls for witnesses," gurgled Mattie. "We've already had the ceremony, but we thought we had ought to wait and tell you goodbye, and we knew you'd be glad to take the minister and the girls home, seein' as we're so crowded by my things.

"We're goin' down to Clinton County tonight," continued Mattie, after waiting some seconds for a response. "You see, it's like this, Aunt Martha, Jeff's so crazy about me he can hardly wait to see me in a home of our own. He ain't ever been in love before, and he takes it hard. Of course"—Mattie wriggled a little under her aunt's steady gaze—"he's flattered different one's a little, just for a joke, but he says he hadn't known a man could experience such feelin's as he had when he seen me out in the wash house with my sleeves rolled up, workin' the butter. He went right off and traded his farm for a dairy. He was goin' to consult you about it, seein' as you're so old and sensible, but then he couldn't when you was so racked with the toothache——. Say, Aunt Martha, where'd you git that hat? I wish't I had one like it."

"Take it for a weddin' present," said Widow McGoon, pulling out the pins, as one in a dream.

"I thought I knew folks," mused Widow McGoon, as she cleared away fragments of the wedding supper, after speeding the parting guests, "but—I'm dumbfoundered!"

* * *

The Albert Gate Enigma.

(Concluded From Page 18.)

asked to be allowed to visit Edith. When the two women met Marguerite flung herself impulsively on her knees and sobbed out a request for forgiveness. Miss Talbot should have been very angry with her erring sister. She was not. She took the keenest interest in the Frenchwoman's romantic history. They talked until Fairholme became impatient. He had not seen Edith for two whole hours.

SIX months later, when the Earl and Countess of Fairholme returned from a prolonged wedding tour on the Blue-Bell thru the Norwegian fiords, Brett was invited to dinner. Talbot was there, of course, and Daubeney, and Sir Hubert.

"Constantinople must be a queer place," observed Jack after the first rush of animated converse had exhausted itself.

"Surely there are no more diamond mysteries on foot!" cried his charming sister, who looked delightfully well, and brown as a berry with the keen sea breezes of the hardy North.

"Not exactly; but I made some inquiries thru a friend of mine in the Legation. Hussein-ul-Mulk and his two Paris friends are quite important functionaries in the palace. You remember that the other pair of scoundrels escaped to Smyrna?"

"Yes," cried everybody.

"Well, Mehemet Ali's relatives heard the truth about them by some means. Within reasonable time they were chopped into small pieces, with other details that need not be repeated."

"Dogs, or pigs?" inquired Brett.

"Dogs!"

"I wish you wouldn't say such horrid things," protested Edith. "Is there any news of Monsieur and Madame Dubois and the fat man, Big Jean?"

"You will receive some in the drawing-room, Lady Fairholme," said Brett; and not another word of explanation would be given until dinner was ended.

In the drawing-room her ladyship was delighted to find a splendid cockatoo, magnificent in size and white as snow, save for the brilliant red crest which he elevated when they all crowded round his handsome cage.

"The happy couple in the Argentine sent him to me to be presented to you on your return," explained the barrister. "He is named 'The Prophet,' and he talks beautifully—indeed, his language is most emphatic."

What a darling;" cried Edith. "I do wish he would say something. Dear Prophet, speak to me.

And immediately the cockatoo stretched his wings and screamed:

"Long live Mahomet! Long live the Sultan. Down with the English! Down with them!"

The End.

* * *

A Sign of Wealth.

AS THE philosopher and his friend strolled along the country road they passed a house standing back in a beautiful garden. "There's an atmosphere of wealth about this home," mused the philosopher.

"Do you judge from the size of this house, the ample garage in the rear, the maid sweeping down the front steps and a gardner busy on the lawn?" asked his friend, trying to follow his reasoning.

"No; I judge by the size of the dog on the veranda. Anybody who can afford to feed a Great Dane these days must have plenty of money!"

Podner

(Concluded From Page 11.)

hanker after a woman twenty years as I had, seeing her always before you, hearing her voice always close at hand, without getting shaky when you meet the man who stole her away, especially when he makes gestures that might mean anything.

"Insinuating?" I asked, cold and deliberate.

"No—a gambler," he answered, sadlike. "He was runnin' the Green Light in Anaconda—Frenchman by name of 'Froggy' Poret, soft spoken and perlite sorta cuss. I hunted 'em years, Pete; hatin' 'em like pizen, till tonight. Reckon I never thought of her side; reckon we got on her nerves, Pete. We're tough old jaspers t' handle women—soft, you know, and kinda gentle."

He went into a study of the flames, seeing there, I reckon, the same pictures the fires of twenty years had painted for me. He brushed his hands acros his forehead. "Frenchman name of 'Froggy' Poret," he muttered; "soft spoken and perlite sorta cuss—the kind women take to. She was a woman, Pete, and women has diff'rent ways from men. She was unsteady, Pete, but I reckon it was a lot our fault."

"There's heaps worse ones," I answered back.

He hauled out his pipe and, after filling her up, tosses the pouch across to me and then we smoked and studied the fire, the embers. Right over the tent where Podner slept, that long-wicked candle of a star was burning, and I felt my eyes moving away from the fire, watching it. I felt pretty good inside, somehow. Joe Ellwood was talking, slow, between puffs at his pipe.

"Pete, me and you picked a woman what naturally liked men who were soft spoken and sorta perlite. Because we wasn't them things she run away and we thought it was her fault—and the man's. Strikes me, we ought t' get along pretty fair, bein' as we're kinda alike. Shall we split this here mine three ways?" He was on his feet, walking round the fire to me, his hand out full length, palm up.

Twenty years of hate is some hate to throw away; twenty years of an idea is some idea. I got up, too, and looked at the hand of Joe Ellwood, then that blamed old candle star blazed in my eyes, hurting 'em and making 'em smart. Don't know how it happened but, when I tried to rub 'em, doggoned if my hand wasn't in the grip of that son-of-a-gun who'd robbed me twice. And the smart all went away as we looked at each other, grinning as we used to grin, twenty years back, in Cripple's old days.

When we'd sat down again, filling up our pipes and drawing steady, Joe jerked his thumb in the direction of the tent.

"Th' little feller's too forgetful for this country, Pete," he said. "We'd better stake him back till th' mine gets t' paying his dividends." He puffed away at his briar quite a while, then laughed. "What's wrong with Little Podner fer a handle t' th' mine?" he asked.

That's about all. Podner kicked at taking a third but it didn't do much good. Gold ain't everything but it's comfortable, and it's nice to have it turning out every minute. It got Podner well—I hear as how he's making a trip around the world. He had his hour and it was a big one, picture in all the papers, name on everybody's lips, actors reciting his poetry. But it ain't spoiled him a bit—not a mite.

Me and Joe each got his book, couple of years back, and right on the first page he'd written, "To my old pardner." They're lying on our desks in our Little Podner offices, right where everybody can see them. Think of his writing that to us—"To my old pardner!" He still calls me and Joe pardners—his pardners. Famous, too—Podner is.

* * *

Fortunes Good and Worse.

"UNCLE DICK," said the little girl, "do you believe in fortune telling?"

"Why—er—do you?" asked Uncle Dick.

"Sure I do!" responded the child.

"Then so do I," said Uncle Dick.

"Father says it's all bunk," confided the little girl. "I told the fortune telling lady that father said that, and she said that all men talked that way. And she told me a dandy fortune. She told me that I had a long life line and would go abroad and would be successful in music and talking and have two husbands."

"Can you imagine that?" commented the uncle, much impressed.

"Isn't it wonderful to tell fortunes like that?"

"I'll say it is. How does she do it?"

"Well," explained the little girl, holding out her hand. "This line shows I will live long, and this little ridge shows that I am musical."

"Yes, I see," replied Uncle Dick. "But where are the two husbands and the trip abroad?"

"I forgot where she found them, but they're here all right," said the little girl with assurance. "She told me one thing that has come true already. She said I would get my new pumps and that the time would be along toward evening. And that's the way it turned out."

"In what manner?"

"Mamma went down after them. She intended to go to town in the morning, but when I told her what the fortune teller had said she said she thought perhaps she had better not go after them until this afternoon."

"That was right," commented Uncle Dick. "It wouldn't be fair to the fortune teller to go and get the pumps in the morning. The obvious thing for you to do about the other predictions is to take up the study of music and keep your eye peeled for a delicate husband. It wouldn't be right to marry a strong, red-blooded man, as he might not die, and thus he would shut off the second husband entirely and spoil the prediction. And, of course, a husband, according to the predictions of the fortune teller, is much more interesting, desirable and according to Hoyle, so to speak, than a husband who just comes along unpredicted in the palm of the hand, or the cards, or the tea leaves, or the big glass bowl, or any of the other numerous places where things that are going to happen cast their shadows before them. But if I were you I wouldn't say anything to the first husband about carrying out his part of the fortune teller's program. He might not like the idea at all, might even renege against the whole blooming idea."

The little girl was looking at the line in her hand which promised a trip abroad and said nothing.

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The Dark Mirror

(Continued From Page 9)

tinted walls, a narrow day bed of mahogany and unpretentious chairs and dressing table to match this last.

Thru still another door a glimpse of white enameled walls, stainless porcelain and nickeled fitttings proved that a civilized bathroom had there been installed, in a building whose every other tenant was content with such facilities for personal cleanliness as were afforded by the common kitchen sink.

The girl shook a bewildered head.

"And you've lived here all along, Mario——"

"Here I have come to rest, Leonora, worn out with the weariness and disappointment of fruitless searching for you. Since that day when you did not call me up and meet me, as you promised, but disappeared without word or sign—I have been half a madman. How could you torture me so?"

"I didn't mean to—I couldn't help myself."

"Where have you been?"

"Not far . . . hiding."

"From the police? Because of that business at Ristori's? You were involved in that? Carnehan, too, and all those others, as well as Bielinsky?" She nodded to every question. "I feared this! Tell me what happened. Why did you not come to me first of all?"

"I was afraid——"

"Afraid of the man who loves you, whom you love? You do love me, Leonora?"

"Yes," she murmured—"yes, with all of me, Mario."

"Then why——"

"I was afraid of Red. He swore he'd have you murdered if I ever spoke to you again."

"That, then, was the only reason why you wouldn't communicate with me, send me one word to say you still lived, you were well, you thought of me?"

"I didn't want anything to happen to you . . ."

"Yet death itself were preferable to such torments of doubt!"

"I know, Mario, I know. Wasn't I suffering the same way? I wanted you so much, I needed you, I thought about you all the time ,dear, day and night."

THERE was an interlude.

"If there'd been any chance," she resumed when it was possible for her again to speak . . . "But if I'd written you, or called up, or tried anyway . . . I was watched every minute. I didn't dare, dear . . . for your sake."

"And I thought you had deserted me . . . Ah, forgive me!"

"Red's sure you train with the cops, and he and Leo are desperate. They've had it all fixed for days to lay up in a safe place over in Jersey, but they can't make a getaway; the bulls are watching too close, they're all over."

"But why Carnehan? The papers said nothing of him in connection with the affair, only the man Bielinsky."

"It was Red done up those two at Ristori's. Leo wasn't even in the room. Because Red killed 'em both, we all beat it without anybody seeing us except Ristori. He was in the hall, just outside the door, and saw everything. And nobody knows how much he's talked, but the cops have been at him ever since. Maybe he didn't tell anything, like the papers say. Maybe he got the third degree and spilled everything he knew. Then there's Harry. He's gone South—I mean, disappeared—and if he once gets where he thinks he's safe, he'll squeal sure as death. Likely he has already. Only headquarters knows, and it isn't saying. Sometimes, you know, they sense enough to work that way, keep all they know under their hats and pretend they're gunning for somebody besides the bird they're really after. So now it's maybe Red they're laying for on the quiet, all the while they're kicking up this row about Leo, making out they think he's the only one. . . . Don't you see?"

"All but why you had to hide . . ."

"Because I was in the room when it happened. Ristori saw me. Harry knew I was there. Besides, the cops are looking for anybody who knew Leo—and they know I know him. If they get me on the carpet, and then a warrant's sworn out charging Red with murder, no matter if I haven't peeped a word I'll get the credit for squealing."

"I see now. My poor, hunted love!" Mario gave a gesture of decision. "No matter. Now you are with me, there is no more to fear. . . . All that is ended!"

In those eyes that looked up so hungrily to his, doubt contended with desire to be persuaded.

"I wish I could see how it's ended."

"Because you have come to me, because I shall take you away with me tonight—far, far from these haunts of crime and terror—and make you my wife!"

"Oh, if you only could——"

"What is to prevent?"

She hesitated, then cried in passionate protest: "I can't, Mario, I can't. The risk's too big. I tell you, you don't know Red. He never gives up. He'll follow us to the end of the earth. It isn't me alone—it's you. How can I do anything I know'll mean your death?"

"Never fear!" The Spaniard had a short laugh of scorn. "Do you imagine that good Mr. Carnehan will remain long at liberty, now that I know what you've just told me?"

For a long moment she said nothing, but after one short step back from him stood staring with widening eyes of dismay and protest.

"You don't mean you'd squeal, Mario!"

"Why not?"

"It means the chair for Red——!"

"Shall that stop me when your life and happiness are at stake? Am I to let the life of a thug continue to stand a constant menace to the woman I love?"

She started forward and caught the lapels of his coat with frantic hands. "Mario, you musn't! You musn't go to the cops! It's death, I tell you—yours and mine." He shook his head with a compassionate smile that only served to excite her to a higher pitch of distracted pleading. "Mario! if you do, they'll get us, they'll get both of us—sure!"

"But every word you say proves there is no room for the three of us in this world. It is his life or ours . . . Resign yourself, Leonora. No argument can move me."

"But you can't Mario—you can't! I won't let you. I won't be the kind of a girl that'll squeal on a pal!"

"It is no fault of yours, dear, if I make proper use of information which came to me by chance."

"No, Mario—please!" she sobbed. He shook his head. She flung angrily away, then swung back, her countenance ablaze. "Do you think I'd go away with you if you did that—marry you—go on loving you, even? Well, you're wrong, you're dead wrong, Mario. Get me right: I love you, but . . . You do like you say, and I'll see you d——d——!"

CHAPTER XXIII.
RECALLED.

SOMEWHERE a tiny bell began to ring. At first no more than ghostly echo in the dimensionless and silent vast which lay between intelligence and body, that shrill small voice gained strength of its very perseverance, became a thin thread of importunate sound, calling, calling without pause or pity, till it fairly ground its character into that indefinitely dissociate mentality; a telephone was ringing.

The body resting on the bed in that darkened chamber stirred uneasily and flung out a hand of ineffective protest. The noise persisted relentlessly. The somnambulist started up on an elbow, made as if to rise, sank back again with a sigh of relief when the ringing was suddenly interrupted.

She lay with open eyes, unwinking, in a confusion of divided consciousness aware of the snug darkness of that room so intimately her own, of the rain clashing outside the window, of the wan light streaming in from the street, of the blank, moonlike face of the little clock upon the dressing table; and at the same time living intensely in that distant place where two wills were contending, striving each to impose upon the other its conception of what was right, fair, just and inevitable.

It was as if her mind were a photographic plate upon which two scenes had been developed; one wherein her common self of every-day was resting securely at home, one in which that wild other self of her dream disputed hotly with the man she loved, in surroundings strange to both selves till that hour.

Of the two scenes, the stranger was the stronger; all her interest was centered therein, and all other things were negligible beside the issue of that struggle, since that issue must be (this she knew the passionate certitude) nothing less than life or death, life with love or death with shame.

And she was racked with the imperative need of making Leonora understand that Mairo was right, that no good could come of standing out against him, that nothing but good could come of yielding to his insistence, the fruit of his great love and greater wisdom. Percipience of her bodily environment was waning swiftly; with all her strength she was willing herself back to Leonora . . .

The telepuhone began again to gibber, in short, strident bursts of sound demanding her heed.

She faltered, hesitated, looked back. In bitter resentment, she understood she could go no furtner, accomplish nothing, till that insensate thing had been silenced.

And no time to waste; Leonora needed her too much. She must respond . . .

In sleep-waking, the girl roused with measured movements that cost her incalculable effort, sat up on the side of the bed, drew the telephone to her. It continued to chatter angrily till the receiver was actually at her ear and she had said: "Hello?"

Out of the enigma of night Philip Fosdick's voice cried: "Priscilla!"

She answered without emotion: "Yes?"

"It is I—Philip."

In the same tenseless voice, she said: "Yes, Philip."

"Did I wake you up? Sorry! I had to."

"Yes . . ."

"Listen to me, Priscilla: I've seen Leonora! I saw her in the street, followed her for blocks, lost her when she entered a tenement; and now I'm on the watch, waiting for her to come out. I had to be sure you were at home—safe—so I called up from a pay station. Are you all right?"

"Yes, Philip."

"Are you quite awake? You don't seem to understand. I tell you, I have seen Leonora—the girl you dream about—a living woman so like you I couldn't at first believe it wasn't you in disguise!"

"Yes, Philip."

"So now you needn't worry any more. I'm on the right track at last. The problem will be solved in no time, once I clap my eyes on that girl again."

"Yes, Philip."

"Priscilla! Can't you say anything else? Is anything the matter?"

"No, Philip . . ." She pursued in the same level accents, speaking slowly, as if with difficulty finding words: "I am quite all right . . . I . . . am safe with Mario now . . . Mario will take good care of me. Good-night."

Without waiting for his reply, she hung up the receiver, replaced the telephone on the bedside stand, sighed, and again stretched out upon the bed.

Immediately deep sleep enfolded her senses like a warm cloud of darkness,

Why the Power To Win Comes From Rich, Red Blood—

THE KIND NUXATED IRON HELPS MAKE

You Must Keep Your Blood Filled With Iron If You Want The Mighty Strength and Tireless Energy To Take First Place and Hold It, Says Physician.

Are YOU Falling Or Going Ahead? If Others Pass You In The Race Of Life It May Be Due To Lack Of Iron In Your Blood.

It is the men of blood and iron who win whether it be in the gruelling endurance test of a Marathon or in the hard fought Race for Success. The weak, thin-blooded men fall by the wayside, their strength and power sapped by Lack of Iron—often at the very moment when the goal seems within reach.

"No man who neglects to fortify his blood with strength-giving, health-building iron can expect other than failure and defeat—he is no match for the strong, red-blooded fellow whose endurance and power knows no bounds," says Dr. H. B. Vail, formerly Physician in the Baltimore Hospital and a Medical Examiner.

"Countless numbers of men," he continues, "who started off in life with youthful strength and vigor, determined to win find themselves today on the verge of a physical and nervous breakdown simply because they failed to keep their blood filled with stamina-building iron. In the mad race for success they have allowed long hours, worry and overwork to drain from their blood the iron which had formerly given them the strength and endurance to keep on. Yet other men go through life apparently possessing, year after year, the elasticity, the strength and the energy of earlier days, for they have within them the never-failing source of courage, confidence and power—pure, red blood rich in iron. Where others hesitate and stumble, these men go forward with a firm step and take the best prizes of life. Their brains are keenly alive, their bodies are fortified with the strength and energy that enables them to take and keep the best the world has to offer. It is surprising how many people who do not get along in life are in reality suffering from iron deficiency and do not know it. To help make men strong and red-blooded there is nothing in my experience which I have found so valuable as organic iron—Nuxated Iron. In case after case I have seen Nuxated Iron begin to give weak, nervous, rundown men new vigor, energy and endurance in only two weeks' time."

Dr. John J. Van Horne, formerly Medical Inspector and Clinical Physician on the Board of Health of New York City, says: "Weakened by the heavy drains upon their nerve force and physical strength, many men are held back in life by lack of iron in the blood. Their thin, pale, watery blood has utterly lost the power to send energy and power through the body and as a result they are without the endurance to keep on—they are forced to drop back among the weaklings and failures—beaten because their blood is literally starving for health-giving iron. Today, it is red blood—rich in iron—such as Nuxated Iron helps to build that gives men the force, energy and power to conquer obstacles and become virtually masters of their own destinies." If you are not strong or well you owe it to yourself to make the following test: See how long you can work or how far you can walk without becoming tired. Next take two five-grain tablets of ordinary Nuxated Iron three times per day after meals for two weeks. Then test your strength again and see how much you have gained. Many an athlete and prize-fighter has won the day simply because he knew the secret of great strength and endurance which comes from having plenty of iron in the blood, while many another has gone down to inglorious defeat simply for lack of iron.

Manufacturers' Note: Nuxated Iron, which is recommended above is not a secret remedy but one which is well known to druggists everywhere. Unlike the older inorganic iron products it is easily assimilated and does not injure the teeth, make them black, nor upset the stomach. Each tablet of genuine Nuxated Iron is stamped as follows N and the words Nuxated Iron are stamped into each bottle, so that the public may not be led into accepting inferior substitutes. The manufacturers guarantee successful and entirely satisfactory results to every purchaser or they will refund your money. It is dispensed by all good druggists.

and her soul fared forth once more on its strange quest.

CHAPTER XXIV.
SURRENDER.

OUT of that blank void grew light and shade in a swirl of formless patches. Effort to adjust one's senses to such confusion induced sensations of fatigue, and some dizziness. With one's eyes open it was worse. One shut them and so found slight relief. The swirl continued. Only by slow degrees did it subside. It seemed long before one dared open eyes again. The first thing recognized was the concerned dark face of Mario . . .

She was in one of the big leather chairs. Mario knelt with an arm round her shoulders, lifting them forward a trifle that she might drink with more ease from the glass of dark red wine which he was offering her.

"What . . .?" she essayed in a husky whisper.

"Drink before you try to talk." His tone was tenderly imperative. With an insistence as gentle he pressed the glass to her lips. She found a dazed smile for these solicitous eyes, yielded, and swallowed a mouthful of wine of a sort she had never tasted, fruity, aromatic on the tongue, warming, invigorating. She drank again, gratefully draining the glass.

"Excellent!" Mario let her head back to the cushion, rose, put the glass aside, returned. "You feel better, stronger, eh?"

She nodded, but her smile was still bewildered.

"What happened, Mario? I felt so funny, all of a sudden, just when the telephone began to ring; and then . . . I don't seem to remember."

"The telephone has not rung, Leonora."

"But I heard it!"

"A ringing in your ears, perhaps. Don't you know you fainted?"

"Fainted!" She started indignantly. "But I never in my life! Why should I faint? I'm all right."

In proof of this assertion she sank weakly back.

"You are overwrought." Mario drew up a chair and sat down. "For days you have been living at high nervous tension, never knowing what fatality the next hour might bring forth. Tonight, against your wish and judgment, you came out to meet a man you fear and loathe—braving the peril of arrest as well as the brutality of this storm. Your clothing is wet thru, you are shivering. You suffered a shock at meeting me by chance. Then we quarreled . . ." He lifted her hands to his lips, one after the other. "The sum of such physical, nervous and emotional stress was too much, Leonora; you fainted without a sign of warning. I caught you barely in time."

"I suppose I must've, if you say so, Mario. . . . But I don't understand. I remember our rowing——"

"Think of that no more," Mario pleaded and, at the same time, insisted. "You and I must never quarrel. There can be no excuse for misunderstanding when our hearts are one." She nodded meekly. "Tell me one thing only," he pursued. Her eyes promised. "Who is Philip?"

"Philip?" Her look was completely blank. "I don't know any Philip . . ."

"You are sure?" Intent search of her face satisfied him. "Strange! In your faint, you spoke that name, as if you were talking in your sleep you said distinctly: 'Yes, Philip,' and again: 'No, Philip . . . I am safe with Mario now.'"

"I don't know." She drew a hand over perplexed brows. "And yet . . . it's funny . . . like an echo, what you say I said."

"No matter." With decision, the Spaniard dismissed the puzzle, took her hands in a firm grasp and held her eyes with a gaze earnest and commanding. "For the present forget all that, forget everything but that we are united now and forever. Nothing—nothing, Leonora—can come between us now. We cannot permit it, we will not. Love such as ours is not to be denied or paltered with upon any conceivable consideration. As I am wholly yours, so you must henceforth be mine; and to us all the rest must be 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' You understand that, Leonora? I have your promise?"

HIS will seemed to beat in waves upon her understanding; she felt unable to entertain one independent thought. Nor could she wish to. Never since childhood had she so surrendered to domination. But now . . . She knew a strange, dear joy in submitting. She bowed her head, then lifted it to show him adoring eyes.

"Yes, Mario . . ."

"So that is settled!"

Mario got up and strode into the bathroom. Water began to gush loudly into the tub. He brought back a light, warm robe of fleecy stuff.

"You are cold and wet; a hot bath will make you another woman. Then put this on. Meanwhile, I will find dry clothing for you, and a cab. Tonight you sleep uptown: the best and quietest hotel in the city will be the safest. In the morning I will call for you, we will go to get the license for our marriage. By noon you will be my wife. By nightfall we will be far from New York."

They kissed. Mario lifted her to her feet.

"The door latches of itself. If any one knocks, pay no attention. I shall be back in a few minutes, and have my key."

In a staring daze, utterly an unthinking puppet of love and gratitude, she saw him go. The sense of his personality lingered, precious and compelling—she did not feel alone.

She moved slowly toward the bathroom, unconscious fingers loosening her sodden blouse. Finding the tub nearly full, she shut off the taps. Only with the silence that followed did appreciation of her solitude come home.

The glow of happiness ebbed from eyes and face and heart, intimations of terror stirred and began to writhe like serpents in the background of her thoughts.

Until then, in her wonder and delight, she had accepted without question the easy explanation that Inez had lost her way upon the roofs and brought her to the wrong house.

Even so: Red must be hidden somewhere in the block of tenements. Suppose he were to learn where she was now . . . Suppose Inez had not blundered, but deliberately and with malicious intent had led her to Mario, then had gone to tell Red . . .

Intuition linked the poles of fact and surmise, completing the circuit of conviction. Instantaneously Leonora perceived with hideous clearness that Inez had planned this in revenge for the long series of defeats she had suffered in their rivalry, something for which Inez alone had been in the first instance responsible. It was Inez who had made Charlie hit the pipe too often, thus clearing the way for this supreme trick of treachery. This made it plain why Inez had not followed to the door to Mario's flat, but had climbed back to the roof and shut the trapdoor. Now Leonora no longer guessed, she knew Inez had gone straightway to tell Red that Leonora, refusing to answer his call, had taken refuge with Mario instead.

Beyond shadow of reasonable doubt, Red was even now on his way to make good his threats.

What if he were lurking in the hallways of the house, or in the dark of the street outside the door? And Mario going unsuspiciously to his death . . .

Perhaps it was not yet too late to scream a warning down the stairs. . . .

Madly Leonora ran to the door, tore with trembling fingers at the latch, and threw it open—to find Red standing on the threshold, a shape of grimmest menace, his slender, feline body poised alertly, an automatic pistol in the hand at his right hip, an evil snarl twisting his cruel lips, murder in eyes whose glance shot directly past the girl to the room beyond.

Before she could lift a hand the man darted in, caught her arm and sent her reeling to the middle of the room, and kicked the door to behind him.

She staggered against the table and caught hold of it to save herself a fall. Carnehan was at her side before any sound could issue from lips which his hard palm sealed brutally. His pistol nuzzled her bosom.

"One peep out of you——" he rasped. cunning eyes raked the room suspiciously. "Where's that d—n wop?"

If it all were a dream, we could laugh at the fantasy of it. But it is too, too real. Thru the eyes of Priscilla Maine we view a drama that can end only in a tragedy for one of the actors. This remarkable story by Louis Joseph Vance continues next week in a generous installment.

Accommodating.

AT A CERTAIN church in an Alabama town it is the invariable custom of the pastor to kiss the bride after the ceremony. Now, one young woman who was about to be married in his church did not relish the prospect and instructed her prospective husband to advise the minister that she did not wish him to kiss her. The bridegroom-elect obeyed the instructions given.

When the young man returned she asked: "Frank, did you tell the clergyman that I did not wish him to kiss me?"

"I did, Marie."

"And what did he say?"

"Why, he said that, in that case, he would charge only half the usual fee."

Perhaps It Isn't.

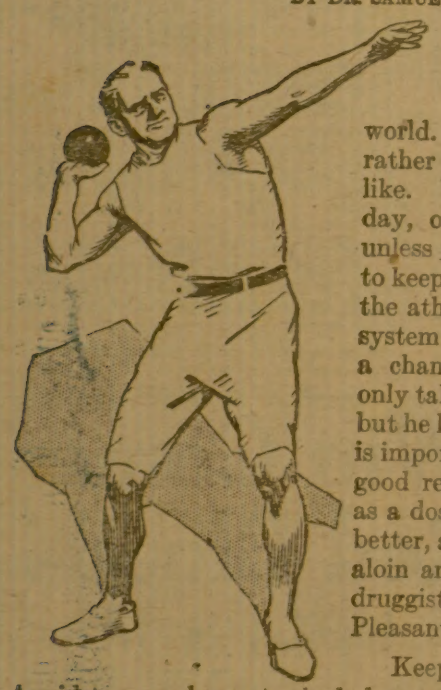
THE family had been having an epidemic of colds and sore throats. Each received the physician's favorite prescriptions for powder and gargle. Finally the maid, a recent importation from Poland, fell ill. The lady of the house tried to give her the powder and gargle, but she insisted on having the physician. And when the latter came he prescribed as usual.

"Now, you see," said the mistress, "he's giving you exactly the same things I took."

"I von't take dem," responded the maid. "Doctor, you are a sensible man, I ask you, is id right a single girl should take de same medicine as a married voman vid children?"

Keeping Fit

BY DR. SAMUEL HAMILTON.



It is because of the war that the perfect physical man has all at once become the idol of the world. You can make of yourself, even rather late in life, almost anything you like. You are not going to get fit in one day, one month, or, perhaps, a year, unless you take enough outdoor exercise to keep the circulation going and practise the athlete's first principle—to keep the system *clean*. He does not give his body a chance to absorb poisons. He not only takes his cold shower, after exercise, but he knows a cleansing of the intestines is important, and he takes occasionally a good regulator and liver cleanser, such as a dose of castor oil, or, what is much better, a tiny pill made up of May-apple, aloin and jalap, and sold by almost all druggists in the land as Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets.

Keep the kidneys in good order also. Avoid too much meat, alcohol or tea. Drink plenty of pure water, preferably hot water, before meals, and drive the uric acid out of the system by taking "Anuric" (anti-uric-acid). This can be obtained at almost any drug store.

Send a bottle of water to the chemist at Dr. Pierce's Invalids' Hotel, Buffalo, N. Y., and you will receive free medical advice as to whether the kidneys are affected. When your kidneys get sluggish and clog, you suffer from backache, sick-headaches, dizzy spells, or twinges and pains of lumbago, rheumatism or gout; or sleep is disturbed two or three times a night. Take heed, before too late! Get Anuric (anti-uric-acid), for it will put new life into your kidneys and your entire system. Ask your nearest druggist for it or send Dr. Pierce ten cents for trial package of "Anuric."

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To advertise our great papers. Send me your name today. We even pay freight and war tax.

The persons who won the six cars I have already given away answered an advertisement just such as this, and in a short time they received a telegram saying: "Congratulations. You have won the Automobile."

Solve Puzzle, and Get 2,000 Extra Free Votes

The drawing below shows the 1920 Model Five-Passenger touring car which I am going to give away. In the scenery around the automobile are several partly hidden faces. See if you can find at least four of them. It will be fun. Turn the picture sideways and upside down and you will see the faces one by one. If you can solve this puzzle it will show me that you are clever and alert—just the sort of person to win this car—and I will send you 2,000 Free Votes toward the Automobile and enter you in my Auto Contest.

Men, Women, Boys and Girls, you can also win, in addition to the auto, splendid prizes, such as phonographs, cameras, jewelry, bicycles, watches, and other presents you will like, without contest. There is no other contest like this.

Send Today for Complete Auto-Winning Outfit

All you need to do to get in line for the Auto and other wonderful prizes is to write me promptly, sending your answer to the puzzle, and four cents in postage to cover wrapping, mailing, etc., of a complete Auto Winning Outfit, also copies of two national publications.

Act Quick—You Can't Lose!

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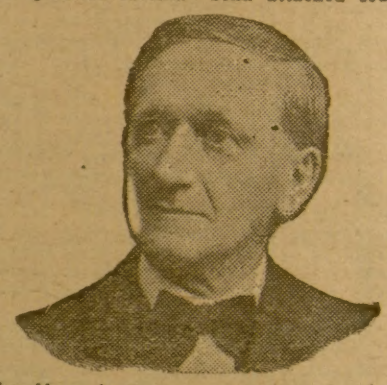

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Please send me by mail, in plain wrapper, your illustrated book and full information about your Appliance for the cure of rupture.

Name .....

Address .....

City..... State.....

A Backhander.

Mrs. Scrapley—I really don't know what would happen, Richard, if ever you agreed with me on any subject.

Scrapley—Something serious, probably, for we'd be dead wrong.

Would Be More Popular.

Miss Oldgirl (who writes)—I am thinking of writing a love story founded on my own experience.

Miss Young—You'd better give it a happier ending, dear.

Then the Fight Stops.

"I see boxing matches between ladies are becoming popular."

"Don't the girls hurt each other?"

"Naw. The winner simply disarranges the other girl's hair."

Wouldn't Hurt It.

Mistress—Mercy, Hilda! You mustn't clean the plates with your handkerchief!

Hilda—Oh, that's all right, ma'am, it's only a dirty one.

CLASSIFIED WANT ADS

Information—The rate for one insertion in The Saturday Blade and one insertion in the Chicago Ledger is 35 cents a word, minimum 14 words, less 3% for cash. Each initial and group of figures is counted as a word, and the name and address are also counted. This is the minimum rate; neither more nor less is charged, irrespective of size or number of insertions. An ad may appear in both publications of the same week, or in the Blade of one week and the Ledger of the next.

W. D. BOYCE CO., Publisher, 500-514 N. Dearborn St., CHICAGO.

SALESMEN WANTED

WERE YOU EVER OFFERED A GROCERY store? You can handle sugar, flour, canned goods, dried fruit, coffee and entire line of groceries, as well as paints, roofing, aluminum ware and automobile oils, with no rent to pay; no money invested; take large orders from samples. Goods are guaranteed and proven quality. Selling experience not necessary. Steady, profitable work for "workers." Address Hitchcock-Hill Co., Dept. 218, Chicago, Ill. Reference: Any bank or Express Co.

SALESMAN—SIDE OR MAIN LINE, TO sell low priced 6,000 mile guaranteed automobile tires, 30x3½ non-skid sells for $13.95; other sizes in proportion. Good money making proposition for live wires. Master Tire Co., 1414 S. Michigan, Chicago.

AGENTS WANTED

BIGGEST MONEY-MAKER IN AMERICA. I want 100 men and women quick to take orders for raincoats, raincapes and waterproof aprons. Thousands of orders waiting for you. $2.00 an hour for spare time. McDonough made $813.00 in one month. Nissen $19.00 in three hours. Purviance $207.00 in seven days. $5,000 a year profit for eight average orders a day. No delivering or collecting. Beautiful coat free. No experience or capital required. Write quick for information. Comer Manufacturing Co., Dept. B-161, Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS: YOU CAN MAKE $4000 THIS season taking orders for our new reversible raincoat. Absolutely guaranteed waterproof. Two coats in one. One side rich dress coat, other side storm coat. Not sold in stores. Takes place of an expensive overcoat. Elegant style. Saves customer over $20. Biggest seller ever introduced. Binford made $104 in one week. Write quick for agency and sample. No capital required. We deliver and collect and pay your commission same day. Act quick. Thomas Raincoat Co., 1811 North St., Dayton, Ohio.

AGENTS: REVERSIBLE RAINCOAT. NOT sold in stores. Two coats in one. Something brand new. Saves the price of expensive overcoat. Guaranteed waterproof or money back. Big seller. Emil Thor made $134 in one week. We manufacture and make to measure. No capital required. Sample furnished. Parker Mfg. Co., 609 Rue St., Dayton, Ohio.

BIG MONEY AND FAST SALES. EVERY owner buys gold initials for his auto. You charge $1.50; make $1.35. Ten orders a day. Write for particulars and free samples. American Monogram Co., Dept. 104, East Orange, N. J.

AGENTS: $50 A WEEK TAKING ORDERS for guaranteed hosiery for men, women and children. Must wear 12 months or replaced free. All styles and finest line of silk hose. Write for sample outfit. Thomas Mfg. Co., Class 211, Dayton, Ohio.

TIRE AGENTS. EXCLUSIVE REPRESEN-tatives to use and sell the new Mellinger Extra-Ply Tires. (No seconds.) Guarantee bond 8000 miles. Wholesale prices. Sample sections furnished. Mellinger Tire Co., 972 Oak, Kansas City, Missouri.

SALES AGENTS WANTED IN EVERY county to give all or spare time. Position worth $750 to $1500 yearly. We train the inexperienced. Novelty Cutlery Co., 23 Bar St., Canton, Ohio.

AGENTS—A NEW ONE! HARPER'S FIBRE broom and Ten-Use brush set combined. Saves broom expense; lightens housework; easy seller; first order returnable. Harper Brush Works, Dept. B, Fairfield, Iowa.

AGENTS—LARGE MANUFACTURER WANTS agents to sell hosiery, underwear, shirts, dresses, skirts, waists, shoes, clothing, etc. Write for free samples. Madison Mills, 503 Broadway, New York.

SELL INSYDE TYRES, GENUINE INNER armor for auto tires; double mileage; prevents punctures and blowouts; tremendous demand. American Accessories Company, Dept. 126, Cincinnati, Ohio.

$3.48 FOR MEN'S MADE-TO-ORDER PANTS —worth $5.00. Sample free. Money-making offer for agents; part time or all. Write today. Chicago Tailors' Association, Dept. J 652, 515 South Franklin Street, Chicago.

AGENTS—MAKE A DOLLAR AN HOUR. Sell Mendets, a patent patch for instantly mending leaks in all utensils. Sample package free. Collette Mfg. Co., Dept. 707-C, Amsterdam, N. Y.

AGENTS, $40 to $100 A WEEK. FREE SAM-ples. Gold sign letters anyone can put on store windows. Liberal offer to general agents. Metallic Letter Co., 431 M, North Clark, Chicago.

MAN OR WOMAN TO TRAVEL, EMPLOY-ing local representatives. Million dollar house. Permanent. Experience unnecessary. State age and qualifications. Local work also. Universal House, Philadelphia.

AGENTS: SELL NEVERFAIL IRON RUST and stain remover. Huge profits. Big line. Sample. Write to-day. Sanford-Beal Co. Inc., Dept. 8, Newark, N. Y.

GUARANTEED HOSIERY SELLING FROM mill earns $8.00 to $12.00 a day for our representatives, all or spare time. Credit. E. Weber Mills, Nicetown, Phila., Pa.

ENORMOUS PROFITS SELLING TO COL-ored people. No capital needed. We trust you. Write for our attractive proposition. Sent free. Tono Scalpa Co., Inc., Richmond, Va.

THIO-DERM, LIGHTNING HEALER; CUTS, wounds, burns, boils, itches, skin disorders, piles. Extraordinary offer. Thioderm, Box 169, Jersey City, N. J.

AGENTS — I'VE A NEW SOAP GAME that's a dandy. New stuff; 100% profits. Sample and full layout free. Write quick. Lacassian Co., Dept. 21, St. Louis, Mo.

AGENTS—OUR SOAP AND TOILET AR-ticle plan is a wonder. Get our free sample case offer. Ho-Ro-Co., 125 Locust, St. Louis.

AGENTS—SENSATIONAL HIT. NEW RUB-berized gingham aprons; attractive; waterproof; rapid seller; particulars. Eyre & Lee, Box 152 N. S. Station, Pittsburgh, Pa. Dept. 72.

HELP WANTED

U. S. GOVERNMENT WANTS RAILWAY mail clerks. Men-women, over 17. Commence $135 month. Quick raise. List positions free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. C 26, Rochester, N. Y.

EVERY READER OF THE LEDGER OUGHT to read these ads. Every week splendid chances to make money—to better yourself—to buy, sell or exchange goods or services, are offered here.

MALE HELP WANTED

RAILWAY TRAFFIC INSPECTORS EARN from $110 to $200 per month and expenses. Travel if desired. Unlimited advancement. No age limit. We train you. Positions furnished under guarantee. Write for booklet CM-12, Standard Business Training Institute, Buffalo, N. Y.

DETECTIVES EARN BIG MONEY. TRAVEL. Great demand everywhere. Experience unnecessary. We train you. Particulars free. Write American Detective System, 1965 Broadway, New York.

MEN—AGE 17 TO 45. EXPERIENCE UN-necessary. Travel; make secret investigations, report. Salaries; expenses. American-Foreign Detective Agency, 126, St. Louis.

BOYS—MEN—BECOME AUTOMOBILE EX-perts. $45 week. Learn while earning. Write Franklin Institute, Dept. C 804, Rochester, N. Y.

BE A DETECTIVE, $50-$100 WEEKLY; travel over world; experience unnecessary. American Detective Agency, 300 Lucas, St. Louis.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, $140-$200; colored porters by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 656 Ry. Bureau, East St. Louis, Ills.

GOVERNMENT CLERKS NEEDED BADLY (men-women), $1,600-$2,300. No experience. Write Ozment, 106, St. Louis.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, $225-$250 MONTH-ly, all railroads, everywhere, experience unnecessary. Railway Association, Brooklyn, N. Y.

BE A DETECTIVE. EXCELLENT OPPOR-tunity, good pay, travel. Write C. T. Ludwig, 320 Westover Bldg., Kansas City, Mo.

FEMALE HELP WANTED

WOMEN TO SEW. GOODS SENT PRE-paid to your door; plain sewing; steady work; no canvassing. Send stamped envelope for prices paid. Universal Co., Dept. 54, Philadelphia, Pa.

GIRLS—WOMEN. BECOME DRESS-COS-tume designers. $150 month. Sample lessons free. Write immediately. Franklin Institute, Dept. C 854, Rochester, N. Y.

WISCONSIN FARM LANDS

LANDOLOGY. SPECIAL NUMBER JUST out containing 1920 facts of clover land in Marinette County, Wisconsin. If for a home or as an investment you are thinking of buying good farm lands where farmers grow rich, send at once for this special number of Landology. It is free on request. Address Skidmore-Riehle Land Company, 26 Skidmore-Riehle Bldg., Marinette, Wis.

FOR SALE

5 MASTER KEYS $1.00. HAVE THIS MOST wonderful set of keys which open hundreds of different locks. Used by locksmiths, janitors, detectives. Master Key Co., 47 Manhattan Bldg., Milwaukee, Wisc.

FOR SALE — MERCANTILE BUSINESS, stock, buildings, lot 150x200. Box 67, Enterprise, Fla.

FIRST CLASS CLEAN FARM FOR SALE. Full particulars from owner. Robert Young, Millet, Alberta.

MICHIGAN FARM LANDS FOR SALE

GOOD LAND ON CREDIT. BIG OPPOR-tunities for you in Kalkaska and Antrim Counties, Mich. Make a home on hardwood land growing big crops of clover, alfalfa, grains, potatoes, etc. $15 to $35 per A. Easy terms. 10 to 160 acres. Schools, churches, railroads, markets. Own your own home. Booklet free. Swigart Land Co., X1245 First Nat'l Bank Bldg., Chicago, Ills.

PHOTOGRAPHY

FREE ENLARGEMENT 5 x 7 INCHES FROM each roll sent us for developing and finishing. Mail your films today, or send for prices and particulars. Topeka Photo Supply Co., Box 527, Topeka, Kans.

HEIRS WANTED

"LOST HEIRS." A 400-PAGE BOOK, filled with names, for lost heirs and missing kin, from different parts of the world. Chancery court of England, Ireland and Bank of England lists included. Price $1. International Claim Agency, Pittsburgh, Pa.

PATENTS

INVENTORS—DESIRING TO SECURE PAT-ent should write for our guide book, "How to Get Your Patent." Send model or sketch and description for our opinion of its patentable nature. Randolph Co., Dept. 174, Washington, D. C.

INVENTORS—MY CLIENTS KNOW EVERY step taken in prosecuting their applications. Booklet sent free on request. Warner Cubberly, 23A National Union Bldg., Washington, D. C.

OLD COINS WANTED

WATCH YOUR CHANGE. MANY COINS worth double and more their face value are in circulation. We pay $5.00 for 1878 half dollar, S, mint. Cash paid for thousands of different coins and bills. Get posted. Send 4c for our large illustrated coin circular. Send now. Numismatic Bank, Dept. 12, Fort Worth, Texas.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

DON'T INVEST IN OIL UNTIL YOU RE-ceive our circular. We have more than 1,000 acres and on part of it oil actually seeps to the surface. If oil comes thru the ground to the surface, there must be a big pool below. We also have some proven acreage with production. This is a chance to make thousands on a small investment. If you have $10 to $1,000 to invest, write for full particulars free. Conroe Oil Company, 226 Binz Building, Houston, Texas.

MILLION DOLLARS MADE OVER NIGHT owning oil acreage. Small spot has done it. Warranty deed to one acre may complete your independence for life. We sell no shares, no leases, but sell land located between four producing oil fields. $200 acre. Five per cent down, five per cent monthly. Free information. Bank reference. Address Texas Oil Acre Co., 119-A N. 7th Street, St. Louis, Mo.

$5,000 YEARLY INCOME PAID THOU-sands of people who invested in Texas oil lands. They made the start. $2 may start you making $200 monthly, possibly more. You get warranty deed to land with interest in well and participating interest in entire subdivision. Results count. Bank reference, established facts free. Write today. Sourlake Texas Oil Co., 303 DeMenil, St. Louis, Mo.

$2.00 MONTHLY BUYS DEED TO LAND and interest in oil wells that should pay $100 for each $2.00 invested. Write for particulars. Texas Gulf Company, 633 First Nat'l Bank, Houston, Texas.

SAFE AS A BANK—300% ANNUALLY. IF you can invest fifteen dollars upwards, write, Midwest Investment Bureau, Boston Block, Minneapolis, Minn.

SEND TEN CENTS (STAMPS) AND GET latest issue "Oil Ledger," giving all data on Texas oil fields. Statistical Department, 226 Binz Bldg., Houston, Texas.

MOVING PICTURE BUSINESS

LARGE PROFITS DAILY MADE IN THIS business. Openings everywhere. Small capital starts you. Complete outfits sold on installments. No experience needed. Our machines are used and endorsed by Government institutions. Catalog free. Atlas Moving Picture Company, Morton Building, Chicago.

MOTORCYCLES

MOTORCYCLES BARGAINS—USED AND rebuilt Indians, Excelsiors, Harleys, overhauled and tested by experts. Guaranteed and shipped on approval. We save you big money. We furnish bank references. Send stamp for free list. Floyd Clymer, Dept. 5, "Largest Motorcycle Dealer in Western America," Denver, Colorado.

MOTORCYCLES—SAVE YOU HALF ON ANY make, singles or twins. Expertly rebuilt, tested, guaranteed. Send 2c for bargain list. The Western Supplies Co., 512 Hayutin Bldg., Denver, Colorado.

TRICKS—GAMES

MAGIC GOODS, BOOKS, CARDS, LODE-stone, tricks. Catalog free. B. I. Smith Co., Newark, Mo.

MAGIC GOODS, CARDS, GAMES, BOOKS, tricks. Catalogue free. National Supply Co., Box 116, Edina, Mo.

SHORT STORIES WANTED

WRITE PHOTOPLAYS; $25-$300 PAID anyone for suitable ideas. Experience unnecessary; complete outline free. Producers League, 420 St. Louis.

SONG POEMS WANTED

WRITE A SONG POEM—LOVE, MOTHER, home, Comic or any subject. I compose music and guarantee publication. Send words today. Edward Trent, 649 Reaper Block, Chicago.

DOGS

FOR SALE—GUARANTEED COON, SKUNK and opossum hounds. List 10 cts. Norman Crawford, Downing, Mo.

MEDICAL

SUFFERERS FROM KIDNEY AND BLAD-der trouble, causing backache, nervousness, tired and worn out feeling, frequent desire to urinate, smarting and burning. Do not suffer any longer but write us for free symptom blank and advice. Hinze Medical Institute, 32 Washington Ave. So., Minneapolis, Minn.

ED'S ROCHELL SALT COMPOUND TAB-lets, easy to take, pleasant in action, one tablet at night will prove its wonderful merit, for constipation, rheumatism, dizziness. 10c, 25c, 50c. Andula Medicine Company, Troy, N. Y.

BOYS AND GIRLS

BOYS AND GIRLS, EARN VALUABLE prizes—skates, base-balls, gloves, dolls, etc., by selling twelve tubes V-Y dental cream and twelve tubes bay rum shaving cream. Send order now. V-Y Products Co., Dept. 22, Milton, Pa.

PERSONAL

MEN—OUR TREATMENT NEVER FAILS TO restore strength to those troubled with nervous, weak, run-down and despondent conditions that undermine good health. Costs nothing if not cured. Write for free book. Cumberland Chemical Co., 32 Berry Block, Nashville, Tenn.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL PA-per published. Free for stamp. Correspondent, Toledo, Ohio.

IF YOU WISH A PRETTY AND WEALTHY wife, write Lillian Sproul, Sta. H., Cleveland, Ohio, enclosing stamped envelope.

NAMES, ADDRESSES, DESCRIPTIONS OF ladies desiring marriage; sealed, 20c. Select Club, B., Topeka, Kansas.

HERMAN C. FOREST WANTED BY THOS. McKilvey, Ponoka, Alberta.

WIDOW, 45, WORTH $50,000, WOULD marry. L-Box 35, League, Toledo, Ohio.

PERSONAL—(Continued)

WEAK, NERVOUS, RUN DOWN MEN; IF you get up in the morning with a dull brain, tired nerves, an ache in the back, a dread of the toil and hardships of every day life, these are signs that some of the organs or functions of your body are not in a healthy condition and should have attention at once. We cure chronic, nervous, kidney, bladder diseases. Book, symptom blank and advice free. Dr. Meyers, 316 Nicollet Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

WILL GLADLY SEND SECRET FREE. I have discovered simple, practical method of quickly starting hens laying eggs so fast, winter or summer, that it is something simply wonderful. Will gladly send secret free, if you write quick, enclosing self-addressed envelope. Mrs. Ward, Route 5, Farmingdale, South Dakota.

MEN WHO ARE LOSING OUT IN LIFE can find a marvelous remedy and complete restoration in 808 Tablets—the wonderful 48-hour medicine. Different from anything ever heard of. Holds world's record. $1 per box. Particulars and wonderful testimonials free. 808 Chemical Co., Dept. G, Pittsburg, Kansas.

BALD HEADS—GROWDINE IS GUARAN-teed to grow hair on your head. Complete five months treatment $15.00 or money refunded. References First National Bank, St. Paul, Minn. Will kill dandruff in five days. Bougie & Company, 339 E. Fifth Street, St. Paul, Minn.

MARRY. THOUSANDS CONGENIAL PEO-ple, worth from $1,000 to $50,000 seeking early marriage; descriptions, photos, introductions free. Sealed. Either sex. Send no money. Address Standard Cor. Club, Grayslake, Ill.

LADIES: WOULD YOU LIKE TO MAKE from $20.00 to $100.00 per month? We want a representative in every neighborhood. No cost to you, we furnish everything, help and teach you how. Particulars free. Imperial Co., Fostoria, O.

THOUSANDS ANXIOUS TO MARRY. Worth to $100,000. Confidential descriptions free in plain sealed envelope. Satisfaction guaranteed. Long established, reliable, trustworthy. Peoples Club, Box 4, San Diego, California.

MARRY—ABSOLUTE SATISFACTION; best, largest; established 15 years; thousands wealthy members. Confidential. Old Reliable Club, Mrs. Wrubel, Box 26, Oakland, Calif.

EXCHANGE PLOTS FOR $$$$. PHOTOPLAY ideas accepted any form; revised, typed, published, Sold. Advisory service free. Universal Scenario Corporation, 232 Western Mutual Life Bldg., Los Angeles, Cal.

MARRY; MOST SUCCESSFUL "HOME Maker;" hundreds rich; confidential; reliable; years' experience; descriptions free. "The Successful Club," Box 556, Oakland, California.

A LONELY MAIDEN WORTH $40,000 wishes to correspond with refined gentlemen under 60; object matrimony. Write Mildred, care Mrs. Phillips, 1817 Hubbard St., Jacksonville, Fla.

MARRY AT ONCE. WE PUT YOU IN COR-respondence with thousands of charming and refined ladies who wish to marry, many worth from $1,000 to $25,000 and upwards. Particulars free. Address Allen Ward, B520, Valley, Nebr.

MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY WITH photos and descriptions free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 23, Kansas City, Mo.

MARRY — FREE PHOTOS, BEAUTIFUL ladies; descriptions and directory; pay when married. New Plan Co., Dept. 21, Kansas City, Mo.

MAN OF HEALTH, WEALTH AND RE-finement, would consider marriage. Learn more. Write Mr. J. S., Box 654, Dennison, Ohio.

MAKE ACQUAINTANCE EVERYWHERE. Send four 1-cent stamps for paper. Address Feminine Review, 22 W. Quincy St., Chicago.

COLORED PEOPLE! ARE YOU LONE-some? If so, write the old reliable Ebony Correspondence Club, Box 22 Carson, Pittsburgh, Pa.

SIXTH AND SEVENTH BOOKS OF MOSES, Egyptian secrets, Black art, other rare books. Catalog free. Star Book Co., BE-1825, Camden, N. J.

GET MARRIED—BEST MATRIMONIAL PA-per published mailed free. Address American Distributor Suite, 215 Blairsville, Pennsylvania.

CATHOLICS WISHING TO MARRY, WANT-ing introductions, booklet free. Catholic Correspondence Club, S. D. Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRY? JOIN THE "HOME CORRE-spondence Club." Particulars free. 222 Morrison St., Grand Rapids, Mich.

GET MARRIED — MANY WEALTHY clients desiring early marriage. Address Opal Club, Box 32, Rosiere, N. Y.

MERCHANT, 35, WORTH $35,000, WILL marry. P-Box 432, League, Columbus, Ohio.

BACHELOR, 33, WITH $35,000, DESIRES early marriage. Z-Box 225, Ft. Wayne, Ind.

WIDOW, WORTH $40,000, WILL MARRY gentleman; old as 60 considered. Warm, 2216½ Temple St., Los Angeles, Cal.

MARRY—BEST PLAN, HUNDREDS RICH, confidential, reliable. Lists and descriptions free. Unity, E-3, Grand Rapids, Mich.

MARRY! FREE DIRECTORY WITH DE-scriptions and photos. Bonafide Co., Dept. 5, Kansas City, Mo.

IF YOU WANT A WONDERFUL LITTLE wife, write Box 749, Chicago, Illinois, enclosing stamped envelope.

What $1 Will Do

Both Heat and Light by Day and Night for the Cost of Light Alone

Use As Your Own 30 Days

"I Will Trust You Gladly" Spear of Pittsburgh

I want you to use one of these luxurious Persian Design Comforts for a whole month as if it were your own. I want you to be the judge of its unusual beauty, its high quality, its soft, fluffy, cuddling warmth, and its *Bargain Price*. I want you to see with your own eyes how it will refine and improve the day-dress of your bed.

Enjoy Its Downy Warmth Thirty Nights

ONLY $1 With order

One dollar brings your choice of these Comforts right into your home on 30 Days' Trial and Use. If your satisfaction is not complete—if you are displeased in any way—you may return it. Your first payment and all transportation costs will be refunded to you. The Trial will not cost you a penny.

ONLY 75c MONTHLY

All Your Money Back

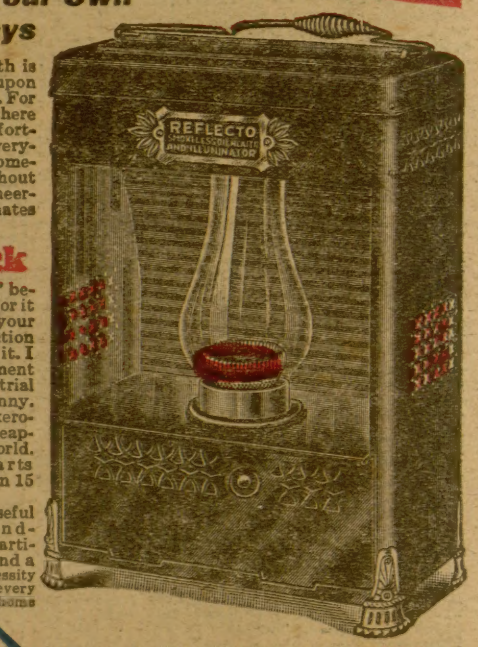
You have your choice of Three Beautiful Color Designs: (1) Main Color, *Pink*. (2) Main Color, *Green*. (3) Main Color, *Blue*. Every Comfort has a rich Persian border and an elaborate Persian Design in Center. These designs are combinations of green, blue, white, heliotrope, old-rose and other dainty, cheerful shades, which blend perfectly with the Main Color. Each Comfort is mitered all around with an attractive border design and has four matched corners instead of only two. It is filled with an abundance of pure, white warm cotton. Weight about 7 pounds and imparts an unusual degree of warmth. Edges are well finished and this Comfort is scroll-stitched throughout. Actual size 68 x 80 inches. A very large practical size Comfort.

You may order more than one comfort.

If you want two send $2 first payment; for three send $3 first payment, and so on.

It is very easy to order this Comfort. Just a few words and the first payment brings it to your door.

ONLY 75c Monthly



Is 24 inches high, 17 wide, 9 deep. No odors, no smoke, and *absolutely safe*. Can be moved while lit. Much cheaper to operate than coal or gas. **Order No. K 2629. Terms: $1 with order, $1 monthly. Total Price $12.95.**

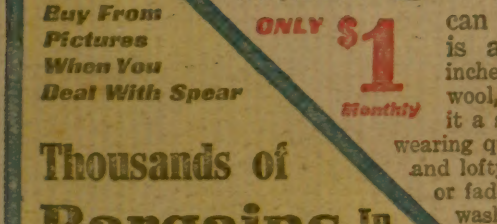
ONLY $1 Monthly

All Your Money Back

Try The "Reflecto" before you buy it. Send for it on 30 Days' Use in your home. If your satisfaction is not complete return it. I will refund your first payment and all freight charges. The trial will not cost you a penny. The "Reflecto" burns kerosene (Coal-oil) the cheapest fuel in the world. Holds 6 quarts which will burn 15 long hours. A very useful and handsome article, and a necessity in every home

Send Only $1

In bitter cold weather, when the fires won't work or when warmth is desired in the unheated room, The "Reflecto" can be depended upon to deliver the most powerful heat; to warm up the biggest room. For the raw cold days between seasons when the fires are out, there is nothing like The "Reflecto" to keep you cozy and comfortable. And, while The "Reflecto" is doing for you everything that a high-grade oil heater can do, it is doing something more; *it is giving you light* at the same time, without a penny of extra cost! On the floor, it gives the cheerful glow of a grate fire. On the table it illuminates the room perfectly because it *reflects* the light.



It is very easy to order this blanket. Just a few words and first payment brings it to your door.

Only $1 With Order

For comfortable, rest-giving sleep, a good, warm, wool mixed blanket is necessary. I guarantee that this high-grade wool blanket is everything you can expect in a fine article. It is a big double size — 66 x 80 inches. It is made of high-grade long-staple wool, and contains just enough cotton to give it a strong, fine warp and to guarantee splendid wearing quality. Its Nap is long and luxuriously soft and lofty. Its colors are strictly fast; they will not run or fade. It weighs 4 pounds. It is pre-shrunk and its washing and wearing qualities are superb.

ONLY $1 Monthly

All Your Money Back

I want you to try this blanket before you decide to buy it. I want you to use it as if it were your own for a whole month. Then—I want you to send it back if you are not satisfied to the utmost. Your first payment and all transportation charges will be refunded. The trial will not cost you a penny. These blankets come in distinctive plaid patterns, two inch blocks. You have your choice of the following shades: *Blue and White, Pink and White, Tan and White, Grey and White, Red and Black*. You may also have *plain Grey with Blue border* (not plaid). Be careful to State Your Choice. You may order more than one blanket. If you want two, send $2 first payment; for 3 send $3, etc.

The Patterns

Order No. K 1441. Terms: $1 with order, 75 cents monthly. Total Price $6.95.

IMPORTANT: Be careful to state your choice of Main Colors: PINK, BLUE, or GREEN.

Order No. K 1415. Terms: $1 with order, $1 monthly. Total Price $12.45. Don't Forget to Plainly State Your Choice of Colors.

You Don't Buy From Pictures When You Deal With Spear

Thousands of Bargains In My BIG FREE BOOK

Everything for The Home

Furniture	Ranges
Bedding	Cooking Utensils
Springs	Refrigerators
Mattresses	Lamps
Rugs, Carpets	Washing Machines
Linoleum	Sewing Machines
Lace Curtain	Guns
Portieres	Silverware
Baby Carriages	Clocks
Dishes	Cameras
Stoves	Victrolas, etc.

Many a family dates its change to a brighter, a happier, a friendlier, a cosier home from the day it received My Big Free Catalog.

This Big Book of Home Furnishing Ideas, pictures and describes a wonderful and beautiful choice of all the things you need to make your dream-home become a reality. But remember this: You Don't buy from pictures when you deal with Spear. A sale is not a sale until you have used the goods right in your home for a whole month and you are Satisfied to the Utmost. Everything I sell is sent on 30 days' Trial and Use. Every order includes a Money-Back Bond.

Write for my catalog today. It proves that though I give the Longest Time to Pay, My Every Price is a Bargain Price. Sending for my Catalog does not obligate you to buy anything. This book is Absolutely Free, and sent post-paid.

Nathaniel Spear President

Spear & Co.

Department C-4, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Home Furnishers for the People of America

SPEAR & CO., Dept. C-4, Pittsburgh, Pa.

I would like to know all about the Spear Open Account Easy Payment Plan for home furnishing. Please send me free, your complete Bargain Catalog with Prices, Terms and Information, without the slightest obligation on my part.

Name .....

Address .....

Town ..... State .....

THE LONGEST TIME TO PAY

THE LOWEST PRICES ALWAYS

EVERYTHING SENT ON 30 DAYS TRIAL

A MONEY-BACK OFFER ON EVERY SALE

MY BIG CATALOG IS FREE

WRITE FOR IT TO-DAY

USE THE COUPON NOW